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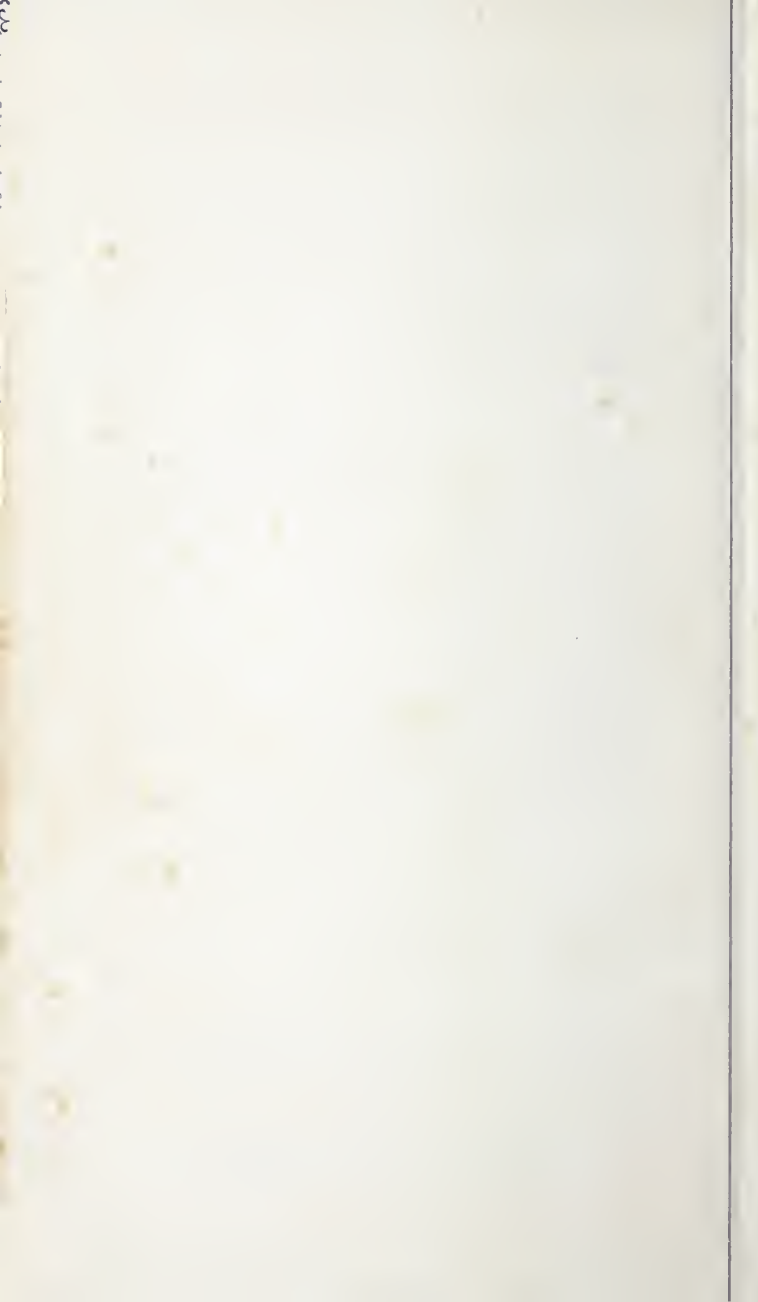
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A GUIDE TO

The Art of Ornamental Painting

THE ARRANGEMENT OF COLOURS IN APARTMENTS
AND THE PRINCIPLES OF DECORATIVE DESIGN

WITH SOME REMARKS UPON THE NATURE AND
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BY

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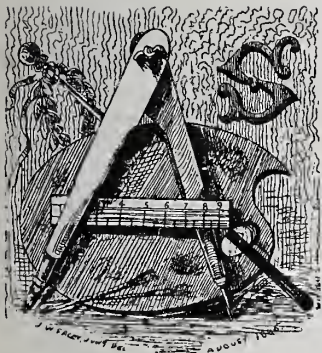
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J. S. DICKSON.

PREFACE.



THE present volume forms, in a certain sense, a sequel to my previous work, "Elementary Decoration," which dealt with the preliminary stages of the craft of the decorator, very few words will be sufficient by way of introduction.

The great strides which have been made in the practice of house painting of recent years have rendered

it essential that any workman who seeks to achieve a respectable position among his fellows, either in the workshop or as a "master-man," should know something of the laws which govern the application of colours to the various purposes for which he may be at any time called upon to give an opinion.

It is not sufficient at this date that a man should be competent to mix paint or to apply it to a given surface with no more feeling in his work than a mere machine; he is required to bring an intelligence to bear upon the routine of his business which can alone make the successful craftsman. If an employé, the painter possessed of artistic judgment—by

which is meant good taste intelligently applied—is the most trusted man, in his particular branch, on the firm; he has the control of his fellows, and enjoys a corresponding increase of emolument. If a master, or a “jobbing man,” he is generally able to keep moving, even in slack times, because his patrons know that they will be satisfied with the work he turns out if they only give him a general idea of their requirements and leave the details to his superior knowledge.

To induce the decorator to regard his work apart from the purely mechanical standpoint, and to bring about an intellectual appreciation of those theories upon which success mainly depends, the following pages have been written; and, keeping that end in view, the use of technicalities where a plainly worded description would answer equally well has been studiously avoided. A technical manual need not necessarily be clothed in obscure phraseology to appeal to the handicraftsmen to whom it is addressed, or to convince them that its author is no mere paper theorist, but himself practically conversant with every subject treated in his pages.

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PRACTICAL HOUSE DECORATION.

CHAPTER I.

THE RELATION OF ORNAMENT TO THE COLOUR THEORY.



THE study of decoration is one which possesses a genuine interest, and to the *worker*, to whom these chapters are more particularly addressed, its interest increases with the degree of proficiency he is able to attain. Step by step, just as he commenced his earlier lessons in calligraphy by the tremulous execution of pot-hooks and hangers, the decorative workman, be he master or operative,

must thread his way through minor forms which are scarcely to be dignified by the name of ornament to those wonderful compositions handed down to us by the genius of Raffaele and other equally sublime creations of historic masters of the decorative craft.

We shall find, however, these to be in most instances practically beyond the ordinary range of modern decorative requirements, and yet even to design the more simple modifications of conventional ornament some knowledge of the higher, if not the highest, forms of ancient decorative

embellishment will be of inestimable service to us in our average undertakings.

The decorator of the present day is accounted to have achieved but little beyond the dead level of mediocrity if he lack the essential attribute of originality, and originality is only attainable by continuous and painstaking study of the work placed before him by the efforts of those who have preceded him. To make that study one of pleasure, to endeavour to teach how the requisite faculty of intelligent observation may be cultivated; to deal as tersely as possible with the practical processes of the craft, and to arrest the sympathies and reach the understanding of every one whose daily occupation brings him in contact with those phases of art-workmanship comprehended in the title of Practical Decoration, is the aim of the present work.

It has been said by some that the "tendency of the age is to decorate." But the tendency alluded to has prevailed in *all* ages and among *all* sections of the human race.

The savage, having made for his use some crudely devised weapon wherewith to attack the animals provided by nature for his sustenance, or to defend himself from the approach of his enemies, has not been found to rest content with the bare fact that the article properly answers the purpose for which he had intended it; he did more—by the exercise of an intuitive imagination, he proceeded to carve upon it such rude forms adapted from his surroundings as seemed to his mind to lend the object that elegance derivable from additional embellishment, and convert it into an article of luxury as well as use. This may have originated in a desire to mark the ownership of a particular weapon; and as the intelligence of the race developed, the natural desire of men to emulate each other gave rise to an astonishing progress in skilled production, and finely carved and painted weapons, boats, basket-work, and cloths became a characteristic of many of the wildest tribes of Africa and the Eastern Archipelago.

The decorators of more enlightened and civilised communities are found upon analysis of their compositions to have grounded their first attempts upon the early workmanship of the savage races, and in their most primitive stage of progress to have striven rather to emulate than to excel the efforts of the barbarian.

It is narrated in the "Voyages of Captain Cook" that many of the painted cloths and weapons, &c., of the natives of the Southern Seas might have been imagined to have had as their decorative ideal some of the most elegant productions of Europe; yet that such was not actually the fact is pretty generally accepted by most authorities, for although many earnest thinkers have endeavoured to theorise upon the probability of early intercommunication between widely remote spots now separated by hundreds of miles of ocean, and have adduced in support of their belief the similarity of ornamental forms in domestic decoration among these scattered dwellers upon the earth's surface, it is far more probable that the imitative faculty of mankind, which caused them to attempt a copy of the natural objects around their dwelling-places, is the real and only explanation of the universality of ornament in all ages and among all men.

Take the example before us. The shield is one of those used by the Malays, and it will be seen that so far as its decorative details are concerned they are familiar to every student of ornament; there is a carved foliated scroll at the head, springing from a centre stem, and one portion forming the actual top of the shield. Then, on either side, we have a panel with a leaf decoration, and the border is continued right round the shield with an interlaced pattern of equally familiar application. The club behind the shield is decorated with similar uniformity of outline, and the smaller weapon (which is very like an elaborated specimen of a policeman's truncheon) is decorated with the wavy lines which are peculiar to Egyptian ornament as well as to the inhabitants of the Malay peninsula, the Dayaks of Borneo, and the New

Zealanders, the latter of whom have also the familiar "diamond lozenge," or chequered ornaments, in numerous instances upon their weapons of warfare or the chase, as well as articles of domestic use.

In the two next engravings is shown an example of this analogy between the decorative idea of the "untutored savage" and that of a more civilised community. The first example, Fig. 2, taken from the handle of a large paddle ex-

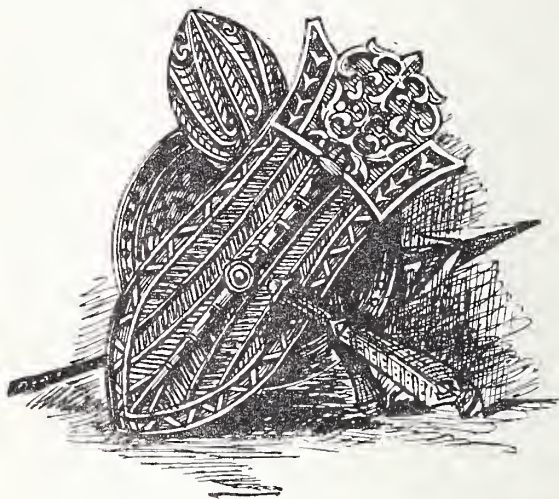


Fig. 1.—Savage Clubs, Spear, and Shield.

hibited in a provincial museum in the west of England, shows the diamond pattern with a border, "dancette," or as decorators sometimes call it, in the idiom of the trade, "a dog's tooth" pattern. Now turn to Fig. 3 on the same page, and we have a diaper which bears as its principal effect a very striking resemblance to the preceding example, and yet we cannot incline to the belief that the aboriginal inhabitants of our far-off colony in the Pacific knew aught of geometrical methods as an aid to ornament, nor could they in this instance

have derived inspiration from the boundless resources of nature. The same similarity is notable in the cloths and basket-work of savage tribes, and in their cloth matting also; the latter, as exhibited in some of our public institutions, bearing so striking a resemblance to the productions of modern manufacturers of floor coverings, as to suggest that these latter had gone direct to the huts and wigwams of the "dark continent" for their ideas of that necessary and useful article. Others, again, closely resemble in eccentricity of design much of the so-called "Japanesque" decoration, particularly in the heterogeneous admixture of circles and angles, of transverse

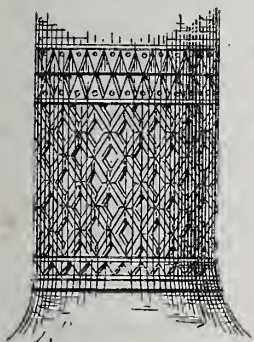


Fig. 2.—Part of the Handle of a New Zealand Paddle.



Fig. 3.—"Diaper" Ornament (Modern).

lines and curves, and other familiar features of the modern craze for Oriental productions. An excellent specimen of a New Zealand house has been erected in the grounds adjoining South Kensington Museum, in which institution the examples illustrated have been also exhibited.

Many of the utensils used in the domestic life of long extinct or widely distributed peoples, when dug by persevering and zealous explorers from the depths of their earthy covering, where they have lain in darkness and obscurity for centuries, have been found to bear upon their surface painted decorative ornaments, the colours of which, although sub-

duced by the decaying action of time, are yet in accordance with many of the rules laid down for the guidance of the art-workers of to-day.

The *theory*, therefore, of decoration may be said to have been built up by the experiences and lessons of the past, and to be to-day in many respects identical with that which guided the master hand working upon the frieze of the Parthenon, or the art craftsman of the Vatican, and so through vast changes of thought, through varied stages of cultivation, and swayed occasionally by the passing fashion of the times, to that ideal which is set before the nineteenth century decorator as the proper standard of "good taste." But if the theoretical principles of decoration are *based* upon the antiquities which, by universal consent, are adopted by nearly every European school of design as the proper models for the imitation of art students, it must be admitted that the modifications which obtain at the present day are more marked in the direction of *colour* than in *form*.

It is probable—indeed, in some instances, undoubtedly the fact—that the entire abandonment of decided or glaringly brilliant colours, especially in large masses, which is a characteristic of modern decoration, arises from the inability of manufacturers to produce many of those wonderfully permanent pigments used by the ancient professors of the art. The ordinary colours obtainable at the present day have an unquestionable tendency to "fly;" and more especially in our larger cities and towns where the atmosphere breathed by their inhabitants is continually charged with gaseous and other chemical impurities in greater or less degree, the tones of colours used in decorative work speedily undergo a transformation, rendering them totally different to what had been intended in their application.

Hence our decorator, to be thoroughly successful in his craft, must be practically conversant with the peculiar attributes of the pigments he may be called upon at any time to use. This knowledge of colour must extend beyond the mere

question of "taste," in placing particular tints in such combinations as may be most pleasing to the eye, or, in strict consonance with the clearly-defined and necessarily-to-be-observed rules, which are admitted to govern their application to the work he undertakes to carry out.

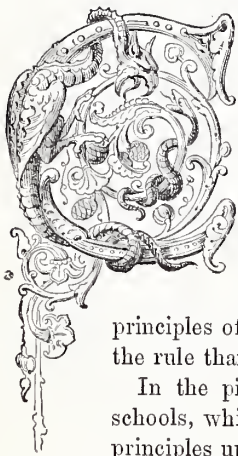
A knowledge of the judicious placement of colours is of the greatest importance. The art of drawing is not, however, to be relegated to the second place, as an inferior draughtsman possessing a good appreciation of colour would not, by any possibility, succeed in giving grace to his performance, but without the *colour sense* he would be simply unable to develop into a decorator at all.

An ordinary house painter accustomed to the mixing of paints and the tinting of large quantities of colour, who could exercise discrimination in matching or contrasting his paints, would be far more likely, by acquiring facility in the use of the pencil, to become a satisfactory and even clever decorative workman.

For this reason we must consider the colour sense the first essential of practical value to the man of business who desires really to acquire a mastery of his craft, and therefore he should understand thoroughly the properties of the chief pigments used in practice before passing on to other branches of a more advanced character.

CHAPTER II.

THE PROPERTIES OF COLOURS.



COLOUR has been exhaustively commented upon in works of a pretentious character; in those of a less exalted degree it is too frequently ignored, from the supposition that the really practical man knows "all about it." A lengthened experience among decorators would incline one, however, to the belief that ignorance of the fundamental principles of the relations of colours is often rather the rule than the exception.

In the pictures of the Venetian and Flemish schools, which undoubtedly supplied many of the principles upon which most of the really successful interior decorations of the period were effected, we find the ruling combinations seldom included the primary colours except in the slightest possible degree. The "complementaries" or mixed tints, founded upon them by the addition of white, were extensively used to break or vary them.

Colours have been by some authorities classed as consisting of positive and ideal. The positive colours are again subdivided into primaries, secondaries, tertiaries, and quariaries. Taking them in their regular order, they may be thus defined for the purposes of the decorator:—

POSITIVE COLOURS.

PRIMARIES :—

Blue (the only *pure* primary).

Yellow (including primrose, lemon, straw, &c., by the admixture of white).

Red (including, by admixture with white, rose, carnation, pink, &c.)

SECONDARIES :—

Orange (composed of yellow and red, and including scarlet and crimson).

Purple (composed of red and blue, and including violet and lilac).

Green (composed of yellow and blue, and including blue and purple).

TERTIARIES :—

[Colours in the third degree and further combinations are usually designated *hues*.]

Citrine (yellow predominating).

Russet (red predominating).

Grey (blue predominating).

Besides these we have buff, tawney, dun, chestnut, marone, and chocolate.

QUARTIARIES.—These are auburn (orange predominating), brown (in deeper tone), puce (purple predominating), lavender (for a lighter tone of puce where the red and blue are equally balanced prior to their admixture with white, or where the violet predominates).

NEUTRAL COLOURS.

NEUTRALS have been well defined as *tone* in which the three primaries balance each other—*i.e.*, are mixed in perfectly equal proportions, and thereby serve each to destroy its individuality, the result being in plain language “neither one thing nor the other,” or *neutral*. The deepest neutral is BLACK.

The mixture of opaque white with another colour, although practically the method adopted in actual work for the production of particular tints, must not be supposed to give the delicate tints of the colour itself.

Thus a mixture of black and white will result in a grey—more often described in practice as “lead colour”—but it fails in conveying to the eye the immediate *neutral* shades.

As it will frequently be necessary to speak of tints, hues,

shades, and tones of colours in treating of particular plans of decoration, it would be well that a brief glossary of the precise meaning of the words should be placed at the disposal of the reader. No expressions are used so indiscriminately by decorators generally as these, and their misapplication might to the intelligent observer create an impression that the operator knew little of the business he professed to follow.

DEFINITIONS.

TINT.—A word used to imply *gradation* where two or more colours are placed in decorative contrast, and more frequently implies the mixture of a principal colour with a given quantity of white.

HUE.—A term used in a somewhat more elastic sense, and indicates any variations of colour independent of strength, whether light or dark, and directly applies to a mixture of either primary or secondary colours.

SHADE.—An expression intended to convey to the mind the idea of an admixture of colours or hues with a darker tone or with black. A tertiary or quaternary colour is therefore a shade of the positive colours.

TONE.—A term used to signify the prevailing colour of *hues* in combination. Thus a wall decorated in one or two colours or any greater number would be spoken of, as to tone, according to the degree in which any one colour first arrests the eye. A wall painted red would be *red* in *tone*. Add a variety of decorations to the red surface, and unless by their vivid contrast they destroy the prominence of the ground colour, the wall would still be described as of a *red tone*.

White and black, possessing none of the attributes of the primary colours, are not theoretically colours at all.

We may now pass to the consideration of *ideal* colours, by which term is denoted such as—although bearing the same relations to other colours as do the primaries—are, by reason of their possessing a tinge of another tone, deficient in that

purity which constitutes a primary. Thus *red* is a primary, but madder lake and carmine—both reds—are not primary colours; they are, as a matter of fact, *ideal*, neither of them being a *pure* red.

Carmine, which in brilliancy excels madder lake, contains yellow; it is, in consequence, a *warm* red. The last-named is not quite free from a tinge of a bluish nature; it is therefore considered a *cold* red.

By mixing these two reds we find that it is out of the question to consider either of them a primary colour; the yellow and blue in their combination form a green, and green means destruction at once to the brilliancy of both colours. If, by reason of the minute quantity contained in their composition, the change is scarcely perceptible to the uninitiated eye, the skilled colourist will note at once that the resulting red is impure, and consequently they cannot possibly be classed as primaries, for absolute purity is indispensable to a primary colour.

“Warmth” and “coldness” are terms used daily in the practice of decoration. By “warmth” is indicated tints which approach yellow, but do not necessarily contain yellow by admixture, and a “cold” tint would be more or less approaching to blue in its composition.

The fewer actual colours utilised in making a given tint the more satisfactory will be its appearance. As an experiment, take the three primaries and mix them together carefully on the palette. The result is a neutral. Then follow the process with the secondary and the remaining tints—the result is inevitably a dirty and nondescript grey. The cause of this is found in the impurities existent in every one of the pigments used, and so in making up paint for decorative work, every fresh colour brought into use to form the required tint must bring with it its quota of impurity, and in a degree injure the delicacy of the projected tint.

The peculiar attributes of madder lake and carmine are shown to give them an individuality of hue, of which a

knowledge is essential to the operator in colours. This knowledge will, as the work of the decorative painter proceeds, be found yet more and more necessary to ensure even a moderate degree of success.

The decorator ignorant of the effects of colours when mixed as pigments for use, must inevitably fail in obtaining for his work that appearance of freshness which is so essential to please the eye alike of the educated or the non-professional observer. Hence, when the decorative painting of a room is sneeringly spoken of by the critic as "muddy" in appearance, we may at once surmise with tolerable assurance of accuracy that the workman has unintentionally spoiled his effort by an improper admixture of the colours in their semi-fluid state as prepared for use, through his inability to perceive that the foreign ingredients, always to be found in them, have had the effect of deteriorating from that exactitude or purity of tone without which all schemes of decoration must be unsatisfactory in character.

Thus, if we presuppose carmine to be the true illustration of RED, another and brighter pigment, viz. vermilion, becomes to our understanding simply a deeper degree of orange, and, on the other hand, by adopting vermilion as the correct type, we must relegate carmine to the category of purple.

One authority on the science of colour—Syme—has given eighteen degrees of red, but, on examination, they will be found to be, generally speaking, compounds into which the complementary colours largely enter.

The use of red in decoration is a subject for the most careful consideration by the practical man. Looking back to the decorations of buried Pompeii, we find a tone of this primary was commonly used by the house artists of that period, and that in the embellishment of domestic architecture its use was very considerable. And yet no colour can with less impunity be indiscriminately employed.

But the germ of these antique successes lies in the fact

that the colour in its first state as a primary was but sparingly utilised—the wall expanse being almost invariably finished in a modification of the original colour from which much of its brilliancy had been cleverly eliminated by admixture.

The application of red in the decorations of the Egyptians was more daring, and indeed in all Eastern nations the ornament of particular periods is largely made up of red in even its pristine brilliancy. It is only as we approach a higher civilisation that the superior intellectual attainments of the people, finding a reflex in the ornamentation of the period, gradually cause its art workmen to look to less pronounced colours and to rely rather upon elegance of form for the achievement of decorative triumphs.

Red, as applied to modern work, has been popular for exteriors; in this case it is usually the purple tone which should be aimed at, although orange-tinted decoration would, in a sunnier climate than that of England, be considered more in keeping. The magnificent orange tinted brickwork of the façade of St. Mark's at Venice is known to artists throughout the world, and has been reproduced in every imaginable manner for the information of less fortunate folks who are unable to see it for themselves.

As an intermediate hue between the skirting or dado and the ceiling of an apartment, red is admissible for interior decoration in certain cases. It possesses—where a deep tone is judiciously arrived at—the advantage of vastly improving and heightening the effect of gilding, such as the frames of pictures or mirrors, when placed against it. Mouldings of burnished or matt gold used to panel out the walls are always improved by being made accessory to deep rich reds.

Another consideration which should be taken into account in deciding a particular scheme of decoration, is that of artificial light. The appearance of red, artificial light being usually of a yellow character, is improved by it, hence in a room or other structure chiefly used at night, it would be the first colour to suggest itself to the mind of the decorator as

the one to select for the prevailing tone, while colours to which the artificial light would be injurious would, when prompted by unerring knowledge of his business, be at once discarded as unsuitable.

In how many cases do we not hear patrons complain that they are disappointed in the effect of their rooms, when perhaps they have been liberal in the expenditure of money on their decoration. Analyse the cause of their dissatisfaction, and it will in all likelihood be found that the decorator had never considered the use to which the apartment was usually appropriated—farther than the fact that it was a dining-room, a library, a ball-room, or what not—and that his colours are unsuited to the light in which his patron is most accustomed to view them. There is another argument in favour of the necessity for the development of the “colour sense” among all engaged in the painting trade. Knowledge of the effect of artificial light upon colours is well known to the linendraper, who is perfectly able to assure his fair customer that a particular shade of silk of which she is dubious by the gaslight will be the identical article she is in quest of when seen by the light of day. Unfortunately a similar acquaintance with the properties of colours in relation to these effects is not so widely apparent among decorative painters.

Enough has been said, perhaps, at this juncture in the way of urging upon the reader the importance of this branch of his trade knowledge, and to induce him to give some little attention thereto as occasion may arise.

Summarising, then, our remarks upon *red*, which we have taken somewhat out of its usual order, as a primary colour, but quite in accord with its decorative importance, we find, first, that it is suitable to most phases of decoration; second, that it does not suffer deterioration by the artificial illumination of apartments in which it is even largely introduced; and thirdly, that it partakes of a numerous diversity of shades. Of this variety the principal feature is that vermilion more

nearly approaches the ideality of a primary colour, as when absolutely pure (a rarity indeed at the present day) it contains least yellow and inclines in the smallest possible degree to blue. Carmine inclines but very slightly to yellow, yet there is some in its composition. Madder lake inclines to blue. Venetian red contains blue.

The second of the primaries, BLUE, has been described as the only *pure* primary, of which *genuine* ultramarine is the one and only illustration, as it inclines neither to red nor yellow. The cheap blues sold by colour manufacturers contain more or less foreign matter, fatal alike to the durability of the colour and to the perfection of its tone. All incline in a great measure to red. Cobalt blue has a decided inclination to yellow, and in Prussian blue this peculiarity is so well marked, that to many persons it appears of a decided greenish tendency, more especially when combined with opaque white for light tints.

Blue is largely a factor in the composition of black, which may be regarded indeed as its proper shade or intensity. Blue-black as a distinct colour is one commonly used in the distempering of ceilings for the purpose of counteracting the yellow appearance of whitening. Blue-black is by some authorities believed to contain the three primary colours.

Blue in decoration is a colour of doubtful stability, Prussian blue being especially ill-renowned in this respect. Even when used merely as the staining property in any required tint, this colour cannot be relied upon if exposed to the action of the weather, nor can its durability be assured when protected by the application of varnish, as would be necessary in its exterior uses. This remark applies to all tints in which Prussian blue forms sometimes an ingredient, as purple, lilac, lavender, &c.

Another consideration in dealing with Prussian blue must not be lost sight of, any more than when treating of the uses of reds, and that is the question of artificial light, the effect of which is decidedly to give a greenish cast to tints in which

it forms a factor, by increasing its before-mentioned pronounced inclination to yellow.

When arranging, therefore, the harmonious or contrasting tints of dado, skirting, cornices, or "filling," in any apartment where blues are to be the prevailing colour, it must be borne in mind that these tints are subject to quite another appearance beneath the gas-jets, and that what in the daylight may be in the operator's judgment a suitable intermediary tint, may at night bear the semblance of an outrage upon the canons of theory, and be diametrically opposed to the harmonies of decorative taste.

It may be said, Why should the decorator consider himself bound by those rules of theoretical procedure? The answer may not improperly be found in the fact that the practical experiences of whole generations of decorators have shown that the theories of successful art craftsmanship have been observed by them all, and that theory and practice in decorative work have grown together until the one is indispensable to the other. Sir Joshua Reynolds is stated to have given utterance to the opinion that "every opportunity should be taken to discountenance the false and vulgar opinion that rules are fetters to the man of genius; they are fetters only to the man of *no* genius."

The third colour upon which it may be necessary to make detailed comment is the primary YELLOW, of which gamboge in water-colours takes precedence in purity. In oil a pure yellow is scarcely possible, the nearest approach to the primary being, perhaps, Naples yellow; this, however, suffers from a slight leaning towards blue in its composition.

Gold ochre contains a proportion of red, and is a most powerful pigment possessing great staining properties.

Yellow ochre varies in precision of tone very considerably; one sample may approach a warm orange tone by the admixture in its manufacture of red clay, while another may possess in inverse ratio a decided predilection towards blue.

Roman ochre is of a cold tone, nearly approaching brown.

Raw sienna is a pigment not to be depended upon, and is consequently used with caution by most decorators. Its tendency is to become darker by exposure ; this peculiarity of course extends to any tint or hue which may receive it as a basis for staining down to its required colour.

When burnt, sienna becomes a warm chestnut red, and in that form is much used in the production of light warm flesh tints, cinnamon, salmon-colour, and similar mixtures requiring warmth of tone without too much brilliancy of character.

Chromes, procurable in light, middle, and orange gradations of colour, are much used by decorators in tinting. They require carefully grinding with the slab and muller before utilising them in decorative work. Yellow, being a primary, cannot be obtained by admixture of other colours, the chrome yellows are therefore chromates of lead, of which mineral they contain a large proportion. Although possessing a remarkable brilliancy and freshness, and consequently readily appealing to the consideration of the decorator, the stability of chrome yellow is of a doubtful nature. It exercises a most deleterious effect upon such colours as Prussian blue when used therewith to obtain a green, the exposure to certain atmospheric conditions operating by bringing about a gradual destruction of the original tint and the assumption of a faded hue greatly to be deprecated in decorative work.

The chrome yellows of commerce vary very much in quality, but inferior manufactures may be easily detected by their lightness of weight and proportionate increase in the bulk of a given quantity.

Other yellows suitable to the purposes of the decorator, are—

Cadmium yellow, a rich glowing hue, affording a variety of useful tones when judiciously blended with white, and

by admixture with lemon chrome producing a wide range of bright clean tints.

King's yellow—sometimes known as yellow orpiment—a remarkably bright colour, but lacking the essential quality of durability, and incapable of satisfactory admixture with white lead. It is a preparation of arsenic.

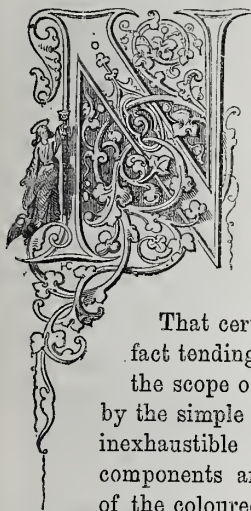
Yellow lake, of which there are numerous varieties, possessing alike the quality of tolerable permanency and being all very bright and transparent.

Having dealt thus briefly with the most necessarily to be remembered attributes of the colours upon which depend all our further combinations, it should be added that they should be borne well in mind throughout every phase of our daily experience.

It will be necessary to refer more particularly in subsequent chapters to the subsidiary tints formed by the mixture of the primaries, each as an individual entity, with opaque white, and also to remark upon the various descriptions of the latter pigment in ordinary use among members of the painting trade generally, as well as by those practising it in its higher form as a decorative art.

CHAPTER III.

THE LAWS OF HARMONIC CONTRAST.



NOTHING renders the proficiency attained by the decorator more readily perceptible to the ordinary onlooker, nor is the want of it more strikingly brought to the front in the choice of the several colours, whether they partake of the nature of hues, shades, or tints, than in their arrangement of place in the decorative whole.

That certain laws govern their disposition is a fact tending rather to increase than to diminish the scope of the workman. The figures formed by the simple turning of a kaleidoscope are nearly inexhaustible in their continual variety, yet their components are limited by the number of pieces of the coloured glass from which they derive their effects, and still more so by the comparatively small choice of tints in which the glass is ordinarily procurable. In the same ratio the relative dispositions of decorative colours are capable of the widest diversity, and are, practically, alone limited by the necessity of choosing those only which best bring into the required prominence the details created by the particular *form* of ornament introduced into the design.

The decorator has therefore to consider the generally accepted "harmonic contrasting" and "complementary"

colours only so far as they may be applicable to his individual patterns, and such rules as are believed to be indispensable to aid him in arriving at a right appreciation of his responsibility, may be so modified in particular cases as to leave him ample discretion in the attainment of any desired effect.

In an earlier work on the more simple forms of decoration,* is given a table of the direct contrasting colours as laid down by some of the highest authorities on the subject, but although as applied to primary, secondary, and even one or two of the tertiary colours, the brief table there given may meet the wants of those employed only upon minor forms of ornament, it will be necessary that the decorator should be able to follow the principle out through *all* the combinations known in the art of polychromatic embellishment.

For greater convenience in illustrating, this subject has been arranged the linear diagram (Fig. 4) which we will suppose to represent the flank of a wall in some particular apartment. The plan is arranged to show the skirting, dado, band, and filling which we may imagine in this instance to be carried up to the junction of the wall with the cornice. It would perhaps be well to remark, with a view to avoid misconception, that the diagram must not be supposed to give the relative apportionments of space to the respective parts of the wall flank; the lines do not of course indicate the scale, but are used simply to show more readily the application of the colours mentioned.

The principle of causing the various colours to commence at the floor line with the darker shades for the skirting and dado is one which need hardly be the subject of extended remark. Everything in nature recedes from the eye, and by the aid of infinite modifications of light and shade the monotony of the view is effectually subdued. In the work of interior painting we are unable to avail ourselves of nature's aid to obviate the crudity of effect brought about by

* "Elementary Decoration," page 2. London: Crosby Lockwood and Co.

CORNICE . A. B. C. D. E. F. G. H. I.

FILLING. .

BAND . . .

DADO . . .

SKIRTING .

French Grey.	Straw colour.	Marone.	Black.
Pompeian Red.	Orange.	Olive Green.	Brown.
Lilae.	Cinnamon.	Red.	Olive Green.
Pale Green Tint.	Light Salmon.	Brown.	Black.
Salmon Tint.	Blue.	Light Brown.	Dark Brown.
Cream Tint.	Light Salmon.	Marone.	Black.
French Grey.	Blue.	Chocolate.	Dark Green.
Pink.	Deep Cinnamon.	Olive Green.	Dark Green.
Red.	Green.	Purple.	Black.

Fig. 4.

the employment of positive colours ; we are, in consequence, compelled to adopt a modification of the positive contrasts, and to rely upon their complementaries to secure for us a satisfactory application of a similar principle.

The vision is less strained by comparatively minute surfaces painted in the positive tones than it would be were the same colours applied to the broader area comprehended in wall painting. We are thus, in a measure, compelled to use only the combinations brought about by the admixture of complementary colours for the purpose, but, nevertheless, the same rule which governs the direct contrasting powers of the positive tones must be easily discernible in every application of their minor degrees.

The gradations of a primary into a secondary are doubtless pleasing enough, but they require the aid of a complementary to effectually contrast them.

Thus, in mural painting, we may have, as in example C in the diagram, red, a primary, used for the dado, with a secondary, lilac, for the upper surface of the flank. But the dado simply meeting the lilac filling without other assistance would be unsatisfactory and harsh. We therefore find it advisable to paint a band—the breadth of which should be proportionate to the height of the room and the amount spaced off for the dado—of cinnamon tint between the two colours, both of which are materially heightened in their effect by their juxtaposition with the complementary hue.

The diagram gives at a glance the relative value of each suggested arrangement, but its suitability to any special apartment is dependent upon, and should be resolved by, the particular circumstances of the case. Thus, B, D, and I would perhaps form a satisfactory selection for a library or dining-room. A, C, and H would look well in a vestibule or lobby, while E, F, and G would be applicable to more general purposes.

A study of the various degrees of contrasts given by tints proportionate in their intensity to the few instanced in this

example, will readily enable the workman to judge for himself the precise combination he may desire to effect, but in them all he must be guided by a consideration of the amount of natural light admitted into the apartment during the day, as well as the manner of its illumination by artificial means.

Taking first the *natural* light given his work, we may be reminded that the precise degree of daylight obtainable in any ordinary room is, in the first instance, dependent upon the amount of window space allotted to it by the architect; secondly, by the "aspect," or point of the compass, from which the light is derived—as, for instance, the windows of a room facing the direct north are known to admit a different degree of intensity to those of an apartment having a southern aspect, hence we speak of a *light* or *dark* room in allusion to the *natural* means of light afforded it by its particular constructive or architectural arrangement; and, thirdly, by the glass used for the windows.

Since the rapidly marked development of the revived system of lead glazing which has been so generally adopted for modern houses, the effects thrown upon the work of the decorator in the daytime must, more especially than at any previous period, be thoroughly understood, as the colours thrown or refracted upon the painted work by the cathedral tinted or still more brilliantly stained glass materially alter the appearance of the colours employed, the natural light being, by its use, more or less decomposed, according to the degree of opacity or brilliant colouring displayed in its arrangement.

By the expression "decomposed" is meant to be conveyed to the understanding of the reader the fact that by the employment of coloured glass the actual component rays comprised in the natural light have been intercepted, and, as regards their natural laws, destroyed by passing before entering the apartment through the coloured glass in the window frames.

To illustrate more fully these effects the workman may

take a piece of board or canvas, and paint thereon two colours. Red and green, as being the brightest at hand, may be most readily called into requisition for the purpose. Then let him take a tolerably large piece of good flashed ruby glass—say, a foot square—and hold it in such a position before the two painted squares upon the panel that the rays of light may pass through it before falling upon the work. The result will be somewhat surprising, for the green becomes at once a *black*, the red, however, retaining its colour. Now, red against black would be a totally different effect in the decorative harmony to that intended by the craftsman, who, possessing the “colour sense,” would under no circumstances fall into an error of judgment which might seriously jeopardise his other combinations. To continue what is undoubtedly a valuable experiment, he may next follow up the proceeding with a similar square of green glass, when the red will be found to assume the appearance of black, while, as in the first instance, its opposite colour, refracting the rays of light thrown upon it, retains its previous individuality.

In the first chapter it was pointed out that the admixture of carmine with madder lake, the first containing yellow and the other blue, created a greenish tone fatal to their brilliancy. As will be seen, by these effects of the coloured glass upon both the red and the green paint, a precisely similar result is brought about by the decomposition of light as if the decorator had mixed the destructive tones with the colour upon his palette. And, just as no workman who knew his business would be likely to spoil his colours by wilfully mixing them in that manner, so he would not, we may suppose, ignore the results brought into notice by this experiment. No more persuasive argument than this need probably be advanced in support of the statement that the degrees of natural light must enter largely into the consideration of decorative details.

As for the question of artificial lighting, the decorator is

placed in these times in a much more unenviable position than formerly, owing to the infinite systems of illumination which may be brought to bear upon his work.

When our ancestors were content with the feeble rays of wax candles the night effects might have been accurately gauged. Now, the proprietor of a mansion with a taste for the acquisition of improved scientific inventions may suddenly determine to take down his handsome candelabra or his imposing gasaliers, and substitute for them the electric light, with the result that the decorations of his apartments present, beneath its cold, bluish-white rays, a totally different appearance to that intended by their designer. Where he would have placed delicate or pronounced *warm* tints as a counter-foil to the rays from an Edison or a Brush incandescent lamp, he finds he has retained cold tones, rendered still more sterile by its uncompromisingly searching brilliancy, and the pleasing satisfaction of knowing that he has put the right tint in the right place is denied him forthwith.

This is noticeable in many of the larger public buildings wherein the newest illuminating agent has been introduced, and, as a case in point, may be mentioned that of two courts at the South Kensington Museum, where the electric light has, in the commonly accepted parlance, completely "killed" many of the decorative examples upon which so much labour and taste have been expended. Even Sir Frederick Leighton's fresco painting, which occupies the large lunette at one end of the court, suffers in decorative effect by the coldness of tone imparted to it by the electric lamps.

Warmth of colour—which does not necessarily mean the employment of garish or overbright tones—is materially assisted by the yellow light afforded by oil lamps or by the use of gas. The decorator should, therefore, know how the apartment he is about to work in is illuminated both naturally and artificially, and should be sufficiently conversant with his business to select or reject particular combinations of colour on that account, and it will undoubtedly occur to

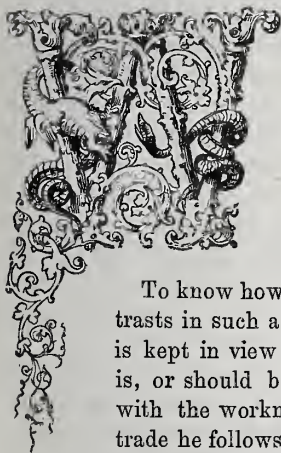
him that in giving theoretical contrasts it must be understood that they are based solely upon the supposition that they are to be shown in a *purely* natural light. Even in this case, however, modifications are essential, for apartments lighted by rays from the south and west admit of the employment of cooler tints than those taking their natural light from the north and east; while in town houses, where, from their close proximity one to another, the whole of the light obtainable is, in a measure, refracted and certainly subdued, a generally warmer tone of colouring is believed to be desirable.

The following is a list of harmonic complementary contrasts recognised by all authorities on colour:—

WHITE contrasts with Black and <i>all</i> colours.			
YELLOW	„	„	Violet, Lavender, and Puce.
RED	„	„	Green and Olive.
BLUE	„	„	Orange, Auburn, and Brown.
ORANGE	„	„	Blue and Grey.
VIOLET	„	„	Yellow, Straw Colour, and Buff.
GREEN	„	„	Red, Russet, Marone, and Chocolate.
CITRINE	„	„	Purple, Violet, Lavender, and Puce.
RUSSET	„	„	Green and Olive.
GREY	„	„	Auburn, Orange, and Brown.
OLIVE	„	„	Red, Marone, Russet, and Olive.

CHAPTER IV.

THE APPLICATION OF COLOUR TO APARTMENTS.



E have considered and tabulated the contrasts which are found generally effective for actual work, and it will be remembered that they differ, in a measure, from the actual contrasting colours, given by most authorities, in the fact that they are in some cases not *direct* contrasts.

To know how successfully to modify direct contrasts in such a manner that the guiding principle is kept in view throughout the minor gradations, is, or should be, one of the first considerations with the workman who seeks to understand the trade he follows.

For example, blue contrasts with orange, but the effect of these two colours in juxtaposition is harsh, displeasing, and unsatisfactory. Try them on a pattern-board, and it will at once be seen that they are unsuited in their pristine hues to the requirements of the decorator. But add a little white lead to each of them, and repeat the experiment with the tints brought about by so mixing them, and it will then appear that, although the *principle* has been adhered to that blue and orange should contrast, the *tints*, when opposed to each other, are as pleasing as any other combination, when placed judiciously upon

that portion of the apartment we may be desirous to decorate.

The art of mixing colours is one too frequently neglected, even by men who possess originality in design, hence we too often remark a carefully chosen style of ornament completely marred by its rendition in ill-balanced tones of colour.

At the present day, when so much of the ornamentation of apartments takes the form of reproduction in painting of natural objects, this consideration is glaringly lost sight of in numberless instances. The artist, relying upon his facility in imitation of natural forms taken from the animal or vegetable world, is repeatedly found to study little, if at all, the colours in which his work may be set. It is thought sufficient for the purposes of decoration that the flower or animal is reproduced in self-colours; its applicability to its position as the embellishment of a panel or a dado enters upon a wide field of theoretical argument, and has been hotly contested by some of the highest authorities in the world of art. This much must, however, be conceded by the most ardent advocate of the "natural" school—that there is much less artistic training (in a decorative sense, of course) required to *copy* the lily or the sunflower in facsimile, and to introduce it upon the panel of a door or the frame of a looking-glass, than would be necessary in the invention of some graceful design of the commonly termed "conventional" kind.

Our present stage brings us to the application of self-colours, by which term is implied those large masses of painted surfaces which constitute the prevailing tone of an apartment, and upon which as being the "ground work" our decorative details have to be executed.

In many houses of the better class it is customary to designate various apartments by titles signifying their general tone of decoration, as, for instance, the "blue room," the "pink chamber," the "red drawing-room," and so on, and

in such cases the colours, or rather tints, employed in them ought necessarily to conform to the rules previously adverted to in the definitions of tone. Everything subsequently introduced into the embellishment of such apartments should be subordinated to the *point de vue*—the aim or spirit of the decoration.

These remarks virtually summarise the whole meaning conveyed by the somewhat widely misunderstood term, “the harmony of contrast,” for while the general impression conveyed to the eye by the *tout ensemble* when entering a room may aptly justify its special nomenclature—we will suppose it to be, if you will, the “pink chamber”—its decorative details must supply the particular contrasts indicated, but so modified, subdued, or otherwise arranged, as to bring about the result in view for the finished effect, which will, indeed, “depend quite as much upon the media which accompany and unite them as upon the colours themselves.” The conclusion of this sentence is quoted from Dr. Hay’s excellent treatise: “By adapting them [*i.e.* the mediatory colours] properly the greatest distinctions are reconciled and brought to an imperceptible adjunct, and it is by them that tone-keeping, and repose is given to the whole.”

We may go further, and emphasise the dictum that neglect of these mediatory colours, or inattention to their arrangement, must create almost irretrievable confusion of detail, besides imparting a crudity of appearance fatal to any artistic effort on the part of the designer.

Again referring to Nature as our Mentor, we find that all her colouring points to the fact that cool-toned and neutralised tints are the most agreeable to the eye, and should predominate, while vivid or intense colours should be used sparingly, and then only as a means whereby the whole may be heightened in appearance by their attractive qualities.

There are several commonly recurring defects in arrangement which are mentioned here only that they may be avoided by the practical craftsman. One of the first is

patent to us all, even to the veriest tyro in his business, and is when the "key" or general tone in which the apartment may be finished has not been definitely decided upon at the outset of the work. Nothing is more disappointing in practice than to be, as it were, moving in the dark, and to go on in consequence aimlessly adding detail to detail, or putting tint against tint, without the least notion of the appearance of the presumably finished work. In everyday language, it is quite as essential as knowing where to begin that the artist should know "where to leave off," and what the effect will be like when he does so.

Another defect in arrangement is found in the undue prominence of any particularly bright or garish colour. This error of taste would, at the present day, be more distinctly observable, perhaps, than at any other period of the history of decorative art, for we are at last attaining to that standard of cultivation and intelligence which should teach us to rely rather upon beauty than brightness. And again, a poor design rendered in subdued harmonies would be less conspicuously bad than it must be were it emphasised by rendition in loud or glaring contrasts. Faults of symmetrical construction in the drawing of, we will say, a running scroll border, would not so outrageously offend the senses if the design were painted in a darker or lighter adaptation of the actual surface-tint of the ground on which it is placed, as it must do if represented by the actual contrasting colour.

In relation to this phase of the subject, it should be noted that the lighter parts of any architectural embellishment, such as the cornices and architraves, may be subdued by the employment of cool, quiet hues, and that the darker portions, viz. such parts as are in natural shadow, may be relieved by brighter colours. Yellow being the nearest approach to *light*, and blue to *dark*, the various gradations of tone would be severally composed in such a manner as to utilise the characteristic properties of those colours in their most suitable degree.

The third defect may easily arise from applying the fundamental laws of colouring without regard to their minutiae—without, in fact, remembering that these theoretical laws can only be imparted to the learner by instructing him in the contrasting properties of the positive colours, but that the principles are, to be successful, equally to be respected in *every* combination, although some may not, in a work of this kind, be specifically dealt with. This defect is traceable in most cases to the introduction of pale and deep tones of the degrees of strength of which the decorator is uncertain, the intensity of one or more giving to the remaining colours a “washed out” or faded appearance.

It must, in fact, be impressed upon the mind that a neutralisation of colour cannot be procured alone by admixture with white—the general effect must be taken into consideration. A pale tint of blue is no equivalent, as a contrast, for the richest orange colour, nor will lilac—the palest possible tint of purple—be found to balance satisfactorily with an intense yellow.

A fourth error to be avoided is found in the sacrifice of variety, arising from timidity. This, although an opposite evil, provokes a similar result to that just mentioned. “Variety,” says an old author, “is found throughout Nature, and decorations struck in a low tone are throughout unsatisfactory.” We know what it means at times, when work is spoken of as being “tame”—the timidity of the artist in dealing with the choice of colours at his disposal has brought about a want of precision or individuality, and the result of his finished labours is disappointing.

Apart from the question of lighting, both by day and night, which was briefly noted in the preceding chapter, there are one or two general rules which should guide the decorator in the selection or recommendation to his patrons of colours to be utilised in the various rooms of an ordinary middle-class residence.

ENTRANCE HALL, STAIRCASES, LOBBIES, AND VESTIBULES.—

These should be painted in cool tones of colour, to admit nothing calculated to mar the effect of architectural features. Grandeur, imposing height, effects of light and shade, and the general proportions of the structure should be relied upon rather than the arrangement of many colours. The reasonable nature of this rule is apparent, since it is evident that the decorations of apartments entered from the lobbies and vestibules must be enhanced in effect if there is nothing calculated to clash with the more important work within. Thus, marbles and stonework are generally utilised by architects in their construction, and the decorator, following his precedent, is chiefly called upon to adopt various shades of drab, or to imitate occasionally the actual stone or marble itself.

DINING-ROOM.—The shades of colour in this apartment should be chosen rather for their warmth and richness than for contrast. No vivid tones are ordinarily permissible, and the garish addition of gilding on panels and mouldings is to be deprecated in most instances. Gilding *judiciously* applied can never *spoil* anything upon which it is placed, but the dining-room, as an apartment devoted to gratification of gastronomical pleasures, should, in its decorative accessories, become a mere setting for the epicurean delicacies and luxuriant brilliancy of the table appointments. The plate chest, indeed, may well be the only contributory to the pleasure derived from the glitter of the precious metal, except upon the surface of the ceiling where gold is often an essential to the style of decoration that may be adopted, and where from its position it would be free from the objections referred to.

LIBRARY.—Richness of tone is not requisite in the colours to be selected for this room, for it may readily be supposed the contents of the shelves will supply whatever would otherwise be wanting in that respect, but the tints may be so chosen as to lend additional grandeur to the proportions of the room. The scheme of decoration need not, of course, be limited to one monotonous tint, but nothing should be

brought in, either as ornament or by the "cutting in" of architectural details, which would be calculated to disturb the "repose" proper to a place devoted to study. For this reason, dull sage greens, duck-egg green, dark dull greys, and drab or stone colour, are generally utilised for the wall flanks, and darker gradations of similar colours may be used for the woodwork, and in some instances for the book-cases; in no instance should the colours used be such as would deteriorate from the appearance of the bindings of the books.

DRAWING-ROOM.—Here we have an exact antithesis of the previous hints, for a drawing-room should before anything be bright, cheery, and even radiant with gilding. The whole array of tints and shades are susceptible of introduction into this apartment, and the more brilliant are the accessories, the greater the range available for the purposes of the decorator, whose colours should, however, be yet kept in a rather more subdued tone than the actual hangings and upholstery of the room. As a rule the lighter tints, admitting of great contrasts, are the more generally utilised in actual practice, but almost *every* colour is applicable in the drawing-room, and *black* and gold or *white* and gold have both, although entirely opposite, come within the scope of the author's experience.

BOUDOIR.—The remarks upon the drawing-room decorations apply to this with equal force, but a greater discretion may be allowed, if possible, within the precincts of this apartment. Generally speaking, it should be gay, light, cheerful, and aim rather at vivacity than gravity. Its hand-pencilled work upon panels should partake rather of the style of the graceful pencilling of the French school than of the grandeur of Raffaele or Michael Angelo.

The panel centre (Fig. 5) is an effective example suited for the boudoir or the drawing-room; the medallion subject might be rendered in cameo, either pink or blue, the figure being white, softened into the ground colour. The scroll, which is somewhat heavy as shown, would appear very

much lighter if painted in pale and delicately softened tints to give due effect to the turn of the leaf and to show the reverse of the scroll. The bird, the jewelled crown, &c., could be effectively given in self colours.

The brilliant and fantastic colourings of the Moresque style have, where the architectural conditions have been suitably arranged, been most appropriately introduced. A specially bright example of a lady's boudoir designed for an imitation, in miniature, of an Alhambric court, with a bijou dome overhead by which the light was admitted through



Fig. 5.—Panel Centre Ornament (French).

rose-coloured glass, and having, moreover, a sparkling fountain in the centre of the floor, may be quoted as a remarkably successful application of the Moresque *motif* to modern requirements.

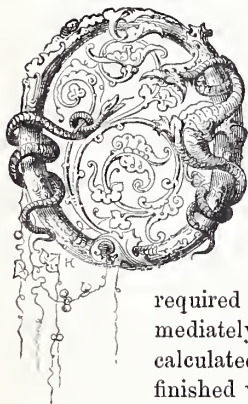
BEDROOMS.—The colours chosen are usually of the lightest description, and an effort should be made to avoid the mere production of nondescript tints which have no definite tone. If the wall paper be in neutral colours, a little more brightness may be pardonably infused into the painted work than the blind following of the laws of harmony and contrast might appear to warrant. We cannot better describe the

idea of a bedroom decoration than by saying it should be "prettily" decorated as distinguished from the more severe phrase of "tastefully" finished. Schemes of decoration founded upon the Persian character, which abounds in light and graceful tints, are especially suited to this apartment. A bedroom is unfortunately at times also a sick-room, and any "professor of the healing art" would readily agree that a general "cheeriness" of appearance in that apartment would go many points in his favour by helping his patient out of that gloomy state of mind which the compulsory repose of the sick-chamber usually induces in persons accustomed to daily activity of body. Let the bedroom, therefore, be as light and cheery as it is possible to make it.

SERVANTS' OFFICES.—It is often considered that plain buff or stone-colour paint is all that is requisite for the basement rooms, despite the additional comfort of appearance given by graining the whole of the woodwork. This list would be incomplete if a brief reference to the servants' rooms were not made, and we may at once assert that nothing bears the wear and tear of this part of the house better than medium toned oak graining. It is therefore cheaper than painting in plain colours, and always looks clean. It can be occasionally—at intervals of two or three years—properly cleansed and revarnished, and there is hardly a definite limit, if this be done, to its durability.

CHAPTER V.

THE ADMIXTURE OF COLOURS FOR SURFACES.



UR attention may now be directed to the actual processes by which colour combinations are applied ; having up to the present rather approached our subject from that theoretical standpoint which is inseparable from the successful practice of the colourist. In the first place it is obvious that, given a

required harmony, the decorator should immediately be enabled to produce it in a manner calculated to ensure its permanency as the finished work. We have considered the properties of particular colours in their original

condition, and we may now pass to a consideration of these when combined to produce particular tints.

It is of first importance, as all tints are largely compounded of white stained down to a required tone, that the decorator should make up at the commencement of his work a sufficient quantity of that pigment. This applies equally to work to be executed in distemper, in "flatting," or in oils. In the first case, his safest plan is to make up a quantity in excess of the actual requirements, and to let his white in bulk be made with a sufficiency of size to render it tenacious of the surface to which it is destined to be applied. The advantage is that the pigments or powder colours required for staining it may

be rubbed up on the palette board with water only, as the viscid attributes of the whitewash so prepared will be sufficient to ensure the binding property of the tones in which it forms a factor. A great deal of time and trouble in the "melting up" of size will also be thereby saved.

For the mixing of tints in flatting, unless the quantity required be large, the employment of dry white lead may be preferred to the article commonly sold, which contains a proportion of oil as the medium in which it has been ground. Dry white lead, however, will be found a troublesome material to grind by hand, but if turpentine alone be used in the process, it will, by the exercise of care and some little patience, eventually yield to the operator, and once properly ground, it may be introduced into the composition of the flatting with perfect safety.

For work which is to be finished in oils, the ordinary white lead, thoroughly strained through fine muslin, or rubbed up with the muller upon a stone slab—or preferably *both*, if time allows—will answer well.

It is best in all cases, even after colours may have been carefully ground by the muller, that they should be *strained* before being applied to the work. Small particles of grit, perhaps from the palette-knife, or even from the edge of the muller itself, are almost unavoidable; hence the value of straining all colours which are to be used in decorative work. Much time is frequently lost, and needless trouble entailed, by the persistent neglect of painters to take this simple precaution, under the wrong-headed idea that the time spent in the proper preparation of their materials does not make sufficient show of progress in carrying out their work. This it is which marks the distinction between what is commonly known as "scamped" work, and that which is more rarely met with, but is eminently more satisfactory in the long run to both employer and employed—"a decent job." Let this be a trade maxim: consider no reasonable time—which to the employer is money—badly expended if it is devoted to

the careful preparation of the colours to be used on the work. It does not take nearly so long to execute work with good and properly prepared materials as with inferior or ill-ground colours.

In staining the bulk to any required tint the decorator should be careful also to rub up the powder or other colour he is about to add to the prepared white before mixing it therewith. How frequently have we not in actual experience observed workmen, "to save trouble," as they foolishly imagined, shake some powder pigment into a pot of white, and, stirring it for some minutes with a sash-tool until it appears to be assimilated, consider they have done all that is necessary! Nothing of the kind. In spreading upon a wall or other surface paint so mixed it is found to be a decided failure, for the unabsorbed particles of the powder-colour continually work up in the brush, creating a succession of dark streaks, and of course at once affording evidence of the carelessness shown in its preparation or the incompetence of the workman.

Even straining tints so mixed will be comparatively useless. Some, perhaps impalpable, grains of the powdered pigment will inevitably find their way through the finest muslin, to reappear at every stroke of the brush, when the mixed colour is applied to the wall. This is especially the case with many of the inferior qualities of so-called ultramarine which are sold at the present day, and the distinguishing property of which is their non-assimilation with white lead—unless they are most carefully ground, separately in the first instance, and then by repeating the process when a portion of the prepared white has been added before proceeding to stain the bulk of the tint.

In making any light tints by the addition to white lead of powder-colours this procedure should be followed. First, grind up the colour *thoroughly* alone; second, add about an equal proportion of white, and mix well together; third, add the colour so reduced in intensity to the bulk of the white lead. Stir it well into it until every distinct particle appears

to have been absorbed; and, lastly, *strain the whole* body, and rub it, by the aid of a tolerably stiff sash-tool, through the finest muslin procurable. The painter may then perhaps depend upon having a properly prepared tint, and will reap the benefit of a little extra preliminary trouble in the pleasure of knowing his work to be capable of standing the strict scrutiny of critical eyes.

Where purity of tint is an essential, the media used for "thinning up" must be considered in relation to their effects upon white or light tones, and for this reason the use of gold size, terebine, boiled oil, and similar dark-coloured thinnings, is inadmissible.

The purity of white, for instance, would be at once ruined by admixture with gold size, which would instantly turn it to a dingy yellow if used in any quantity. It must not, however, be supposed that white lead ground simply in turpentine really produces an actual white. It has a leaning even then to yellow. As a corrective to this tendency it is usually advisable to add a small proportion of blue, or even black, either of which are capable of imparting an intense whiteness of appearance.

Syme has mentioned in his nomenclature of colours that there are eight distinct tints of white: which is by the same authority said to be the reflection of all colours simultaneously. If the lightest possible tint of any colour be placed in juxtaposition with the most intense of the same colour, it becomes, so far as the eye can perceive, white. But place it against the intense white, and its true tint then becomes recognisable.

It is seldom, however, that the decorator is required to use white in its actuality. His taste is called into requisition to take off, rather than emphasise, the "rawness" or frigidity of this pigment. Thus, if a room is to be treated in what is conventionally termed "white and gold," no decorator would endeavour to increase in the manner mentioned, or by any other method, the intensity of the white.

He would rather remember that the warm rich hue of the gilding would necessitate, for the sake of harmony, the employment of a counterfoil to the crudity of the white ground work, against which the reflecting brightness of the yellow metal would stand out as too bold and even displeasing a contrast. Hence, he would desire, by the admixture of burnt sienna, in infinitesimal proportion, to produce a cream tint, so pale indeed as to be what Syme would probably describe as one of his eight degrees of white. A ground prepared in this manner is usually designated in the trade "ivory white."

In treating a room in pale tints of colour, without gilding, the same rule may be well observed if white forms any considerable part of the decorative scheme, and no harm can be done by adding to the white a portion of the tint which comes immediately in contact with it. Thus we will suppose a door to be finished with white panels, grey or lilac stiles, and pink mouldings. White lead used as ground up in oil would be too yellow in tone for this combination, if rendered a perfect white it would be too cold against the warm tinted mouldings, but by adding to it the merest touch of pink the approximate harmony would be immediately gained and the repose essential to a pleasing result readily attained for the whole.

It is of course understood that white being the most attractive to the eye of the whole range of colours in the painters' vocabulary, by its affinity to light, is the most amenable to modifications of tint such as those suggested in the previous paragraph, and as shown to be necessitated by its tendency to cause all colours to recede when any one of them is placed in immediate contact with it. In its original hue, therefore, it can only be regarded as the basis whereon by admixture the whole range of decorative tints may be compounded, and as the one colour which in our table of contrasts we have shown to be the direct contrasting colour of all others, in greater or less degree, as the case may be, in

proportion to the intensity of the colour against which it may be placed.

Too much stress cannot be laid upon the importance of using only the best procurable qualities of white lead for decorative work. The covering body of inferior lead is so much less than that of the *genuine* article that economy of price can only act detrimentally upon the finished appearance of work in which it is used.

GENUINE WHITE LEAD should be simply a carbonate prepared by subjecting the metal in various forms to the action of acetic acid, and as this gradually brings about a corrosion of the lead surface, an incrustation of subacetate is successively formed, and in due course is converted into a carbonate.

The ground article is next prepared by collecting the carbonate, which is washed and ground up to the consistency of a thin paste by the addition of water. This, again, is finally submitted to grinding with linseed oil in about the proportion of 100 lbs. of the carbonate or *white lead* to 8 lbs. weight of linseed oil.

The constant system of adulteration pursued by some manufacturers is a source of considerable inconvenience to the decorator, and a word here may not be out of place as a hint for its detection. The foreign matter introduced is often chalk, or more commonly sulphate of barytes. In the first case the spurious nature of the pigment may be easily ascertained by the decrease of weight in proportion to its bulk which necessarily ensues. In the latter event, where the presence of barytes is suspected, the solubility of the whole mass may be determined by the addition thereto of diluted nitric acid, when the sulphate of barytes, being indissoluble, will be found precipitated in a solid or granular form on the bottom of the vessel containing it.

Ground white lead being naturally a drier, will be found to be reliable when mixed with turpentine alone, but where large surfaces are to be covered, for convenience of working

it is desirable that an additional proportion of oil should be mixed with it, and, to hasten its drying properties, a small quantity of drying oil varnish, the paler the better, is sometimes combined with it as "thinings."

Any remarks upon the preparations of white used in decoration would be incomplete without a reference to another form known as ZINC WHITE. This bears among practical men an unenviable name, as lacking the requisite "covering body" for ordinary work, although the absolute purity of its hue renders it for some descriptions of painting almost an essential. To obtain this remarkably pure whiteness in the *lead* pigment without destroying its density has long been an object of research among chemists and colour manufacturers. Although, as we have said above, the decorator very seldom requires to use (as a decorative effect) an absolutely pure white, it may be remarked that the greater the degree of absolute whiteness procurable in that pigment when considered as a vehicle for compounding various pale and delicate tints, the more cleanly and bright will be the resulting appearance of the various hues; hence, the invention of a non-poisonous white lead, of which the credit belongs to the firm of J. B. Freeman and Co., the well-known colour and varnish manufacturers of Battersea, is likely to prove of great advantage to the decorative painter not less than to the ordinary workman. Of its non-poisonous property it is unnecessary to write. If a decorator were restricted in his work to the use of absolutely innocuous pigments, it is to be feared he would prefer to abandon his task rather than add to his theoretical and practical trammels so irksome a restriction upon his inventive faculties as it would be likely to prove to him. But of the sterling merits of this newly-invented pigment much may be said. Its density is greater than that of ordinary white lead, so that a far less quantity of staining pigment is requisite to obtain any given tone. How great a saving in cost this excellent property will effect on a job of reasonable dimensions will

be at once understood, especially in the composition of such tints as carmine-pinks, verdigris-greens, and all hues obtained by adding to the bulk of the white pigment expensive colours of these and similar kinds. The author has himself subjected this new preparation to practical tests, and is fully satisfied of the superiority of "Freeman's white" over the white leads produced by the old or Dutch process. Moreover, it may be emphasised that it is really *white lead*, not a preparation of zinc white in the usual sense of the word, although an infinitesimal portion of oxide of zinc is required to bring about a chemical change in the sulphate of lead when held in solution. When the resultant pigment is ground up in the ordinary way "Freeman's white" is *de facto* white lead, and being prepared from the sulphate, it is not affected in the least by the atmospheric conditions of climate or by sewer gas. To the decorator nothing is so important as the use of a pigment which shall be reliable for the purposes of "matching." It may at times be necessary to repair some portion of a decorative "bit" on a wall, dado, or ceiling. Great care may have been taken to match every tint with exactitude, and for a few weeks or months the effect of the general whole is absolutely perfect; but how often does it occur that, in less time even than we have supposed, the repaired portion is observed to be becoming gradually darker than the older parts, until at last an ugly and irritating patch attracts the attention of every person who enters the apartment? The inventor of a pigment possessing perfect purity of white, together with absolute immunity from chemical change of hue in all conditions of exposure, richly merits the thanks of art-decorators in every way as much as those of the ordinary house painter or the builder, who, perhaps, would prefer to consider the patent pigment in relation to its properties as a preservative of woodwork or its capacity for "bearing out" upon a house front. With these we have not in this volume anything to do, but there is no reason why lead prepared by this im-

proved process should not flow as readily from the brush of the house painter as from the pencil of the decorative artist; while from the neutral nature of its ingredients it undoubtedly combines with more facility with other pigments than ordinary white lead.

LITHARGE (protoxide of lead) is an established drier formed by collecting the grey powder which is found upon the surface of the melted metal, and exposing it further to the action of heat and air.

SUGAR OF LEAD, procured by gradually sprinkling oxide of lead in pyroligneous acid until by continuous stirring the acid is saturated, and allowing the product to settle until cold, is another recognised drying medium well suited to the requirements of decorative work.

Possessing no tint in themselves, these may be safely utilised for mixing with the most delicate colours, and they, therefore, have an advantage over gold size, terebine, and the darker descriptions of varnishes, which often injuriously affect the purity of tints into which they may be introduced.

We have dealt at some length with the various forms of white, as they occupy so important a place in the composition of the decorative tints which are appended at the conclusion of the present chapter, in the whole of which white will be seen to form, as above stated, the basis of the combinations enumerated. In each case the combination is that found to be the best suited for ordinary work by actual experience, and will be found to differ in many particulars from the tables laid down in contemporary works. The object being to present a *practical* view of the decorative craft, there is here no merely blind following of theoretical laws enunciated by others, but the pigments given are those most readily to the hand of the modern decorator. With that end it will be seen the list is divided into two sections, as although most colours may be successfully worked in distemper, there are many pigments which are not available for compounding

with oil as a vehicle for painting, notably some of those "struck" upon whitening as their basis in bulk.

OIL COLOURS AND FLATTING.

PALE TINTS.

BUFF :	<i>White</i> , yellow ochre, burnt sienna.
BLUE :	<i>White</i> , Prussian blue.
CREAM :	<i>White</i> (predominating), yellow ochre or middle chrome.
DRAB :	<i>White</i> , umber (burnt or raw, as a warm or cool tint may be required).
FAWN :	<i>White</i> , raw sienna, vermilion.
GREY :	<i>White</i> , ultramarine, lake. <i>White</i> , burnt sienna, indigo. <i>White</i> , vegetable black, lake. <i>White</i> , Prussian blue, Indian red.
LILAC :	<i>White</i> , vermilion, ultramarine.
LAVENDER :	<i>White</i> , Prussian blue, lake.
PINK :	<i>White</i> , crimson lake. <i>White</i> , vermilion. <i>White</i> , Indian red.
PEACH :	<i>White</i> , vermilion, ochre, purple brown.
SALMON :	<i>White</i> , vermilion, ochre.
STRAW :	<i>White</i> , chrome yellow.
STONE :	<i>White</i> , ochre, umber (see <i>Drab</i>).

DEEP TINTS.

BROWN :	<i>White</i> , Prussian blue, Venetian red. <i>White</i> , purple brown, lake. <i>White</i> , indigo, ochre, vermilion.
CHOCOLATE :	<i>White</i> , lake, vegetable black, purple brown.
GREEN :	<i>White</i> , ochre, indigo. <i>White</i> , sienna, Prussian blue. <i>White</i> , yellow chrome, Prussian blue.
LEAD COLOUR :	<i>White</i> , black.
ORANGE :	<i>White</i> , orange chrome, lake.
VIOLET :	<i>White</i> , vermilion, Prussian blue, lake.

In addition to the *tints* there are several varieties of "self-colours" or tones obtainable by admixture with white, viz. :—

GREEN :	(<i>Sage</i>), white, Antwerp blue, ochre. (<i>Pea</i>), white, Brunswick green. (<i>Duck Egg</i>), white, ultramarine, chrome. (<i>Olive</i>), Oxford ochre, Prussian blue.
BLUE :	<i>White</i> , Antwerp blue. <i>White</i> , indigo.
PURPLE :	<i>White</i> , ultramarine, lake.

The blue tones are given as either Antwerp blue or indigo if used in their intensity as oil pigments would appear black.

DISTEMPER COLOURS.

The same pigments, either as powder colours or prepared ready ground in water, may be used as in the examples above given, with the following additions in which the colours named are not so suitable for oil colour work.

TINTS.

PINK :	<i>White</i> , rose pink.
ORANGE :	<i>White</i> , Dutch pink, lake.
GREY :	<i>White</i> , celestial blue, rose pink.
	<i>White</i> , blue black.
STRAW :	<i>White</i> , Dutch pink.

Either whitening or *dry* white lead may be used as the basis of distemper tints.

In all instances the proportionate quantities of each must depend upon the requirements of the decorator, and are determined by the hangings or the furniture of the apartment, or the general conditions already referred to in the previous chapter.

While treating of colours in distemper it may be well here to mention the fact that all greens made from copperas have the peculiarity of becoming of a yellowish tinge after exposure to the light when used as distemper tints. This should be borne in mind by the decorator when arranging his details, or he may find the harmony of his effect jeopardised by the chemical change referred to, which does not, however, affect colours prepared in oil.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ARRANGEMENT OF WALL SURFACES AND COMBINATION OF COLOURS FOR INTERIORS.



ATTENTION having been duly accorded to the composition of the paint, and to the most advantageous pigments to be used for producing particular tints, we may next refer to the yet more important considerations of their harmonious application to the work in hand, in order to suggest, as well as it is possible to

convey them to the student of decoration in the absence of the actual colours in illustration of these remarks, some suitable combinations for interior colouring. The suggested tints show how

closely the theories previously advocated are bound up with the practice of the craft.

Decorative art is divided at the present day into a number of recognised "styles," the names of which, in most instances, convey to the mind only in the slightest degree (and in some cases not at all) an idea of the precise characteristics of the ornament employed in them. Thus, we have the "Georgian," the "Queen Anne," the "Adams," the "Elizabethan," and

numerous others which, so far as they refer to the furniture, upholstery, and general architectural details, are perhaps well understood ; but when the painting of surfaces, the “ picking in ” of enrichments, and the addition of applied ornament is in question, we enter upon an entirely different branch of the subject, which, it must be admitted, is but imperfectly comprehended, and to which the simple title of the special period sought to be imitated can give us no clue whatever.

We will, in the first case, deal with the “ Georgian ” period, as being the nearest to the era in which we are living. Any one who has taken the trouble to watch during the past decade the great improvements in decorative taste which have taken place in that period will at once understand that the domestic decorations of the earlier portion of the present century could not, with the exception of those larger works to which reference is frequently made as affording subjects for study and emulation, vie with those which would be introduced into a middle-class dwelling now. The rules of ornament were not so generally understood by the workmen of that day as the decorators of the present understand them ; hence it follows that much of the decorative work of the past was *not* carried out with the same consideration of the proprieties as we should to-day expect to be shown.

In some houses of that period we may even now look upon the ancient craftsmanship of an apartment where the Greek fret formed the staple adornment of dado and frieze, while the door panels displayed work in the purest Italian style, and the ceilings were carried out in the “ clouded ” manner which years ago enjoyed wide popularity.

It is obvious that for the modern decorator to take such an apartment for his model, and to found thereon a “ Georgian ” dining-room, would be to subject him to the charge of ignorance of his business when judged by the standard held aloft by such advocates for exactitude of detail as are found among the decorative authorities of to-day.

It is a sign of a weakening of originality when decorators are found so ready to fall back unblushingly on these so-called "styles," and to adopt them with all their faults and blemishes simply because they satisfy that current hankering after the "antique," to which we are indebted for sham "Chippendale" or "Sheraton" furniture, bogus sixteenth-century *bric-à-brac*, and other modern old-fashioned "notions," as our American brethren term them.

At the present stage of our work we have rather to deal with the most fitting colours to be introduced than with those forms of ornamental detail which will later engross more of our attention.

Before applying the colours, however, we must, if we desire to act upon the axiom that "no good workman should start before he is ready," get an idea as to the "setting out" of our wall flank.

Here we are confronted with a wide divergence of plan, and much of our labour and the scope of our decorative treatment will depend upon whether the apartment has a constructive or actual dado, or whether we are to form for ourselves (by the spacing out of the wall-paper, or a contrast of colours in the form of painting) the requisite features of the style to be adopted.

To impart a clearer idea to the student of the specially prominent characteristics of the walls of apartments in various styles, the drawings which illustrate this chapter may probably be found of service. They are purposely of the simplest possible character, and are strictly illustrative only of the relative proportions of the dado, wall surface, the frieze and lower members of the cornice in each instance, and therefore require but a very brief explanation.

Fig. 6 furnishes an idea of the setting out of a wall flank as most commonly met with in ordinary working experience, and it would be equally applicable whether intended to be placed in the hands of the painter or the paper hanger.

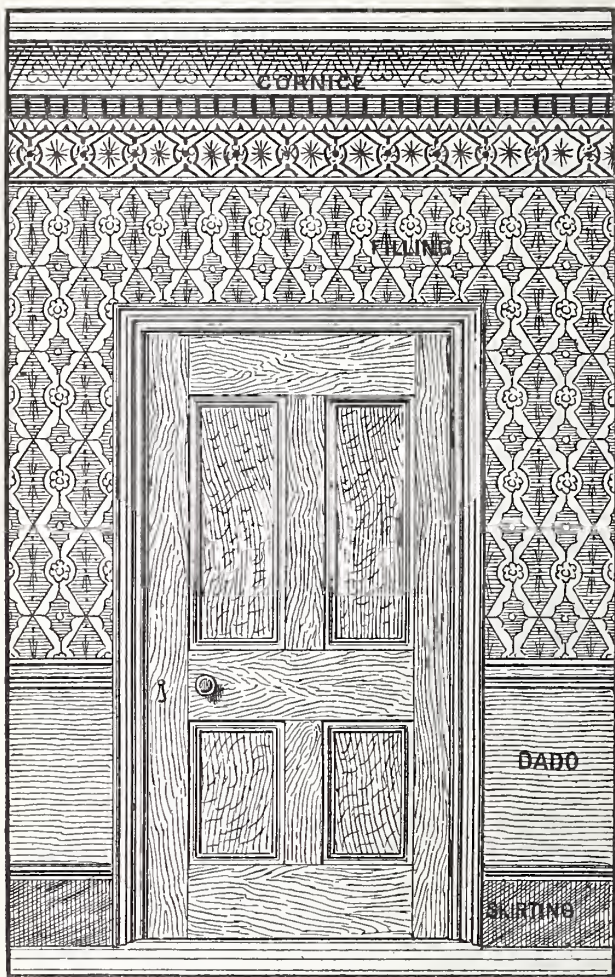


Fig. 6.—Relative Height of Dado to Wall Filling in ordinary Apartments.

For our present purpose, however, we may assume that

if it has to be dealt with by the painter or house decorator, he will mark out his dado at about the height of the middle rail or cross stile of the entrance door. The height of this dado is as nearly as possible about that of the kind generally adopted in an apartment of the ordinary type.

In old houses belonging to the latter part of the last century it is usually found to be constructed of wood, with a series of proportionate mouldings above the entablature, and corresponding in detail to those of the skirting.

Where no such architectural construction exists, a plan has been very successfully adopted of selecting a suitable moulding and nailing it upon the wall flank at the required distance from the floor; the specially-prepared mouldings in black or stained oak, walnut, &c., procurable from many firms in our principal towns, possess the advantage of ready adaptation to the wall after the whole of the painting or papering has been finished, and effectually conceal any inequality of line which may have been caused by inferior workmanship. Indeed, when it is intended to supply such enrichments little care need be taken to ensure precision in this respect, and a considerable saving of time in "cutting in" the lower colour to the upper may be thereby effected.

The addition of a frieze below the cornice, although shown in the diagram, is scarcely a necessity, and when the room has the disadvantage of a low ceiling it is sometimes preferable to dispense with it altogether, for the reason that all ornament below the cornice, and immediately abutting upon it, must, as a matter of course, detract from the apparent height of the room. The width of the frieze will therefore, in any case, be dependent upon the actual height of the apartment, and may therefore be increased or decreased in proportion accordingly.

Fig. 7, as will be seen, differs very materially from the preceding example, inasmuch as the dado has in this instance been increased in height until it is nearly on a level with the top of the upper panels of the door. This extension of the

dado arrangement is a peculiar characteristic of the houses of the Jacobean period, and where the whole of the fittings and furniture are correspondingly quaint in construction,

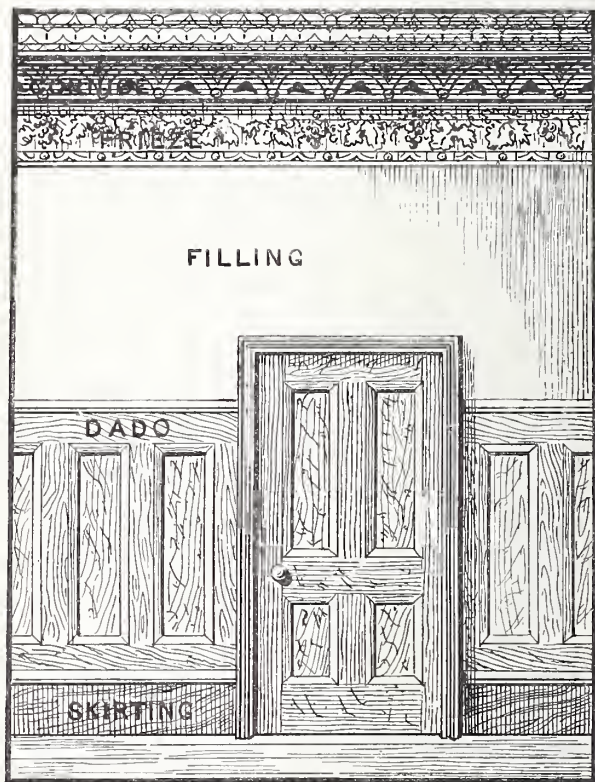


Fig. 7.—High (Panelled) Dado.

its effect is both novel and pleasing to nineteenth-century connoisseurs. But when so great a width is required, it is obvious that if finished in monochrome its effect would be rather to offend the eye; it is, in consequence, essential

that its monotony should be broken by decoration, and in constructive dados of this kind it is usual to panel them and to pick out in relief the mouldings by which the panels are defined. In this, as in the preceding example, the width of the frieze must depend entirely upon the proportions of the apartment.

In Fig. 8, we have another departure altogether, and one suited only to a limited range of interiors. The frieze is

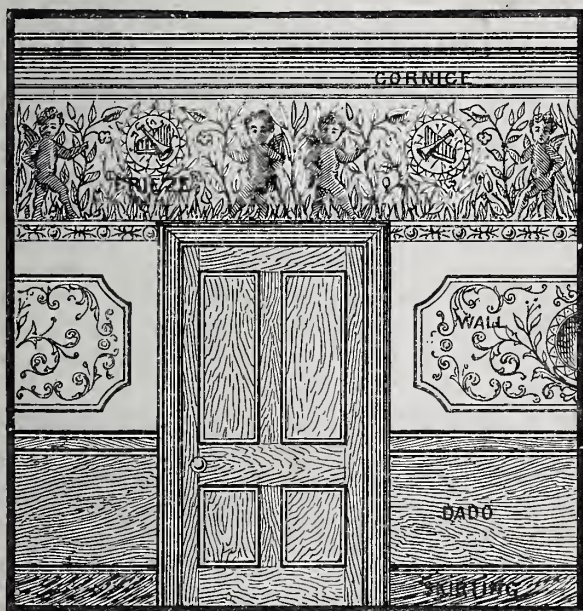


Fig. 8.—Wide Frieze and Panelled Wall.

here brought down from the cornice to a level with the architrave above the door. The comparatively small dimensions of the filling are, however, relieved from the meanness of appearance they would otherwise convey by a subdivision of the entire space into panels, which readily lend themselves

to decorative embellishments. An arrangement of this kind is often adopted in the quaint mansions which are so rapidly increasing in the fashionable quarters of the metropolis, and may, indeed, be classed as a characteristic of the style.

Some appropriate styles of colouring applicable to these examples are appended.

Fig. 6, as a dining-room, has been most satisfactorily finished in actual practice by adopting grey tones with dull blues, and carrying out the decorations upon that ground in a cream tint inclining slightly to green. The stiles and architraves of the doors painted in a grey tone composed of white, vegetable black, and crimson lake, and the panels in a blue composed of white and Prussian blue, with sufficient raw sienna added to break up the brightness of the tint. Upon this an effective decoration in the cream-tinted green may be painted or stencilled, and the mouldings round the panels may be relieved by a pale, dull pink, compounded of Indian red and white. Of course, it is only possible here to give these hints as a key-note to the whole, for, as already explained in a previous chapter, the degree of light or depth of shadows in the room itself will perhaps necessitate a reduction in, or extension of, the brilliancy of the tints suggested. To the practical painter these will have ceased to be difficulties in the way of success, while the novice may take heart of grace by the remembrance that with the best advice in the first instance for his guidance, actual experience is the most satisfactory teacher. The wall flank in this instance may be a dull pink, the dado several degrees darker, or the whole may be kept as nearly as possible in approximate tones to those used in the decoration of the door.

Fig. 7 may be painted in Pompeian red tones, the enrichment of mouldings, &c., being picked out in cream colour or cinnamon, the wall filling in dull greens, blues, or salmon tints, and such ornaments as may be applied should be completed in lighter or darker variations of the prevailing colours. Although struck in a somewhat low tone, an apartment

of this kind, by the variety and richness of the constructive enrichments, may be made to look most satisfactory. Where, however, there is an absence of such decorative accessories it may be desirable to throw in a little more warmth of tone, and to carry out the ornamental work in brighter colours, but always in accordance with the rules of harmonic contrasts.

In Fig. 8, which might be a boudoir or a "morning-room," the depth of the frieze necessitates some amount of attention being bestowed upon it; and a variety of pleasing patterns may be suggested of a more or less ornate character, while a variety of bright tints may readily be introduced into the cornice. Pale "peacock blue," pale green relieved with bright pink, pale cinnamon tints, and generally bright toned modifications may here be introduced, and the fullest selection from the list of mixed tints which was given in the fifth chapter is permissible in this case. The panels round the room may be made the medium for the display of exquisite pencilled ornaments, and to them, in a subsequent chapter, it will be necessary to direct our attention.

CHAPTER VII.

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF MURAL DECORATION.



BEAUTIFUL and varied *forms* of ornament, not less than the properties and relations of colours and pigments, demand equally our earnest study, that we may be able intelligently to comprehend those which have been handed down to us by the art craftsmen of the past, and more especially to determine their adaptability or unfitness, as the case may be, to the style of decoration chiefly in vogue at the present day.

That a knowledge of freehand drawing is essential to the decorator almost “goes without saying,” and with the many facilities afforded by the schools of design which are to be found in all our provincial towns and in every district of the metropolis, there should be few readers who have not gained some degree of proficiency in the *imitation*, at least, of freehand outlines of a more or less ornamental character.

In decoration that proficiency must be extended to the designing not only of outlined scrolls or geometrical combinations, but of figure and landscape. Ornament “in the flat,” to use the proper technical term, belongs to the former category, and relies for its effect upon mathematical accuracy together with firmness and precision of outline. The next

step is the execution of ornament "in the round," in which we shall have to treat of light and shadow, depth and breadth, and graceful delineation of form, the *chiaroscuro*, in fact, of the entire combination. In the next chapter will be shown how the colours are prepared, and in what manner they must be applied in order to produce this necessary effect, without which no "artistic" effort would be held to be worthy of the name.

As we are now chiefly concerned with wall or mural decoration, in which every one of the branches of decoration hinted at may be, and are, frequently employed, the student of ornament has a wide field of observation before him, and may profitably study the reproduction in colours of a large number of familiar objects, some of which as decorative forms appear as illustrations.

To make the meaning more clear, let us suppose we have to decorate the walls of a music-room—such an apartment as is often found in these days of musical culture in the mansions of the wealthier classes. If the wall is to be panelled the decorator will often be called upon to represent in colours the lyre, the harp, the Pandean pipes, and even drums, tambours, &c., are not infrequently grouped together as if fastened by scroll ribbons and pendent from the walls. Fig. 9 gives a pen-and-ink sketch of this kind of decoration; it is of French origin, and was much used in the time of Louis XVI.; painted on panels, and in the magnificent cabinet work of that era, it found a place in the inlaid designs for which the French were then celebrated, being rendered in various choice woods to give as much as possible the natural colours to the group.

Again, in the case of a billiard or card room, representations of popular sports may be effectively introduced. In this case the artist has only to consider the practical work before him, but the designer—and the happier result will be found, in most cases, when the two are combined in an individual executant—should be able to infuse poetry and meaning into the decorative scheme.

Thus in the representation of sports he might by a little exercise of thought depict on the four walls of his apartment



Fig. 9.—Pendent Music Group (French).

or the four corners of his ceiling, perhaps, those appropriate to the four seasons of the year, as football in the spring, rowing for summer, cricket or shooting for autumn, and skating in winter. If he desires to give a free appearance to his panels he may introduce these as “cameo” figures, he may array them in judicious drapery and thereby give his fancy the fullest scope.

He would not, for instance, array his skating party in “chimney pot” hats, or the female figures in a nineteenth-century “crinoline,” but by a

little study he would be enabled to so modify the exigences of costume as to preserve his meaning without detriment to the subjects represented.

If he is engaged upon a dining-room he has at his command “all the kindly fruits of the earth,” and marvellously beautiful are the combinations that may be made with them in skilful hands, while the more substantial viands, or the representation of animals and birds of rare plumage, may be worked up in aid of the decorative effect.

In the frieze pattern (Fig. 10), an original design is given as an illustration of the decorative application of fruits, &c.

It will be seen that the vine leaf from its graceful shape is an aid to decorative effect, forming a support on either side to a cameo, which contains a representation of Sappho with her lyre. This would be suited to a music-room or boudoir if harmoniously connected with the general surroundings of the room, but in this instance the remaining panels of the frieze contain baskets of fruit; and this with the vine leaves and grapes would fit it for reproduction in a dining-room. The medallion should not be repeated more than once on each side of the room, unless the apartment be oblong in shape, when its longer sides would, perhaps, take a replica of this feature of the pattern, or if the room be very large a repeat might be found necessary—and in that case the centre subject of the cameo should be changed, so as not absolutely to follow one only idea. The figures might, as suggested above, be made



Fig. 10.—Original Design for a Frieze. Fruit and Cameo Subject.

representative of the seasons, and the other panels would then be altered in such a manner as to keep in view the leading idea or "key," by filling the baskets with appropriate fruits, and giving other support to the cameo than merely the grape pattern shown in the drawing. Such an arrangement for a four-sided apartment, giving to each a "season," could not fail to be satisfactory if rendered artistically by the decorator. It is, in fact, the infusion of variety into the work, while preserving its leading features, that marks the distinction between the work of the decorator and that of the paperhanger, wherein the sole variety is found in endless alternations of two or three subjects, and in an apartment of any considerable dimensions there is invariably an inordinate repetition of each identical panel. The figures in each cameo being varied would obviate that disadvantage, but of course, in a mere printed frieze, however carefully chosen, such an idea would be almost impracticable unless the design were especially printed to the order of the decorator. The cameo should be either a blue or dull red ground, with figure rendered in white on the blue or in pale yellow on the red ground, and shaded into the ground colour with as much softness of outline as consistent with clearness of effect. Some further remarks upon "cameo" painting will be found on page 82. In the "basket" panels the fruits may be either painted in natural colours on a dark ground, or treated in the same manner as the medallion subjects. Either plan would look effective, but preference should be given to the first as affording the greater variety of treatment. The borders at top and below the frieze are conventional in character as a counterpoise to the naturalesque treatment of the main design, and should be rendered in suitable colours in "diaper"—*i.e.* in flat tints upon an unbroken ground tone.

In the boudoir or the drawing-room, where the range of colours applicable to their artistic treatment is practically unlimited, as great a licence may be taken with the forms of

decorative work. Flowers of brilliant hue, foliage, and imitation of bead work, music, birds, animals, landscape—one and all are at the designer's command, and by attention to the *symbols* conveyed in their introduction, so that each may possess its particular meaning, the most pleasing results are obtained. This may properly be termed "emblematic" decoration, since the aim should be to endow every single feature of the whole with poetic imagery, and thereby lend an additional charm to the work of the artist.

The ideas here enunciated form a characteristic of the Renaissance period which was carried in France to a great excess in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but in spite of the teaching of those *savants* who affect the greatest horror of imitative representations of natural objects in their proper colours on places where they could not possibly be in stern reality (as for instance a recumbent figure of one of the Muses on the ceiling of the Hôtel de Ville at Brussels, reposing gracefully for support on the upper members of the cornice), we are bound to approach this subject from the practical standpoint of a decorator, and to believe therefore that all that is beautiful in art may—if introduced systematically and properly balanced with the surroundings or uses to which a particular apartment is applied—be equally beautiful and quite as much to be admired in decoration.

Müller, a German writer, says upon this point, "The laws of art are nothing else than the conditions under which the sensibility of the mind can derive agreeable emotions from external forms. They determine the artistic form according to these demands of sensibility, and have their foundation therefore in the constitution of the sensitive faculty. The artistic form must then in the first place possess a general conformity to laws manifested in the observance of mathematical relations or organic forms of life; without this regularity it ceases to be artistic form. But beauty (of outline) is a more immediate predicate of the artistic form in its reference to sensation. It lies in the

notion of a work of art as an infinite combination of an artistic idea with external forms, that *it must have a unity to which everything in the work may be referred*, and by which the different parts may be so held together that the one, as it were, demands the other and makes it necessary. The work must be one and a whole."

The Arabesques of Raffaele, of which reproductions are to be seen at South Kensington Museum, and a portion of a pilaster by whom is illustrated on page 89, are usually quoted as examples of this application of natural forms, both animal and vegetable, to the purposes of ornament, and in England from the time of Henry III. to the close of the reign of Edward III. a similar system of wall decoration largely prevailed. The brightest and most lively colours were applied in masses, and upon the grounds thus produced were painted representations of animals and the human figure, birds, and foliage, sometimes in one tint only and at others in varied colours. One of the most beautiful of the designs peculiar to this period was a pattern composed of vine leaves, the drawing of which was remarkable for its freedom and the elegance of its curvilinear arrangement; the tendrils, the leaves, and the clusters of ripe fruit were represented in red, green, and purple tints, while birds of beautiful plumage were represented as nestling among the leaves. An illustration of this design exists at Rochester Cathedral in the wall painting of the St. William's Chapel, and another specimen is found beneath the canopy of the monument to the Countess of Lancaster, in the choir of Westminster Abbey. Figures and various devices were often incorporated with the foliage in such designs, sometimes in composition with the foliage and forming the terminals of floriated scrolls, and were often introduced within coloured medallions as vehicles for the display of faces of men and angels, full length figures, and emblems.

The value of all decoration consists in its being used to add beauty to common things, to relieve the blankness of

bare walls, floors, and ceilings, and it is essential that in our consideration of all painted decoration, as in the choice of paper hangings, curtains, and carpets, *form* must be regarded chiefly as the vehicle of colour. Intense tints at the present day are unsuited to the comparatively smaller apartments of modern houses, unless used sparingly and distributed with sufficient skill to use them as a means of enlivening a mass of secondary tints. Strong contrasts of colour and harsh outlines, as well as preponderance of deep tones, have been over and over again demonstrated as reducing the apparent proportions of the room in which they may be employed. This observation is rendered necessary here, as, while advocating a study of the work of past centuries to aid the decorator of to-day, we are not-for a moment required to believe that the gaudy colours used in the mediæval period would be suited for reproduction in an eight-roomed "villa residence." Account must be taken of the fact that the halls of our forefathers were often of gigantic proportions, being divided for various domestic uses by a simple curtain or arras. In the application of natural forms to the purpose of decoration, it should be remembered that no fantastic design can possess the elegance of one based upon that really experienced in nature. Thus for intertwining with scroll work the convolvulus, trepolium, woodbine, &c., will be found thoroughly in keeping, and the same remark applies with equal consistency to the painted representations of birds and insects. "These may," says Mr. Jewitt, "be twisted into almost any position and shape. A lizard with its beautiful emerald green back, its yellow underparts, and rich brown mottlings might be introduced with its long tail wrapped and twisted round the stem of a plant, and its little head, with brilliant eyes, shown just peeping out from under one of the beautiful flowers." The lady bird, with its bright red body with small black spots might be effectively shown upon a leaf or stem, while butterflies and moths, their papilionaceous colours in never-ending varieties, lend themselves readily to the requirements of

boudoir and drawing-room embellishment. In the examples of the Italian school and the sixteenth-century decorations of France, squirrels, monkeys, goats, and indeed almost any of the smaller animals, are found both naturally and artistically treated, and shells, &c., lend their individual beauties to many of the choicest decorative examples of Theodore de Bry, who also introduced jewelled forms, strap work, and flowers in happy combination. Fig. 11 gives an idea of this style of composition. The subject is "The Chase," but the decorative treatment so completely subordinates the actual symbolism, that the whole design may be considered purely as ornament. There is the stag, evidently making a desperate attempt to escape the shaft which is being aimed at him by the winged hunter from his well-poised bow, and



Fig. 11.—"The Chase," Portion of Decorated Frieze Border (French).

on the other side is a hound in full cry; but each of these is so cleverly interwoven with the foliated scroll work as to impart that symmetrical appearance to the design which lends it its greatest charm. In the Palace of the Dorias at Genoa, we find the cornucopia and ornamented vases also introduced, while in the wall decorations of the Giant's Staircase, in the Ducal Palace at Venice, by Benedetto and Domenico de Mantua, winged animals, which possess some analogy to the ancient examples of Nineveh, form a characteristic of the cinque-cento ornament, and in art phraseology are generally known by the designation of *grotesques*.

To the pendent groups of musical instruments may be added the "trophies" of the Renaissance, in which the cinque-centists painted, principally in yellow cameo on a blue

ground, ancient and modern armour, helmets, weapons of war and mathematical instruments, open books, &c.

Passing onward to examples of the seventeenth-century

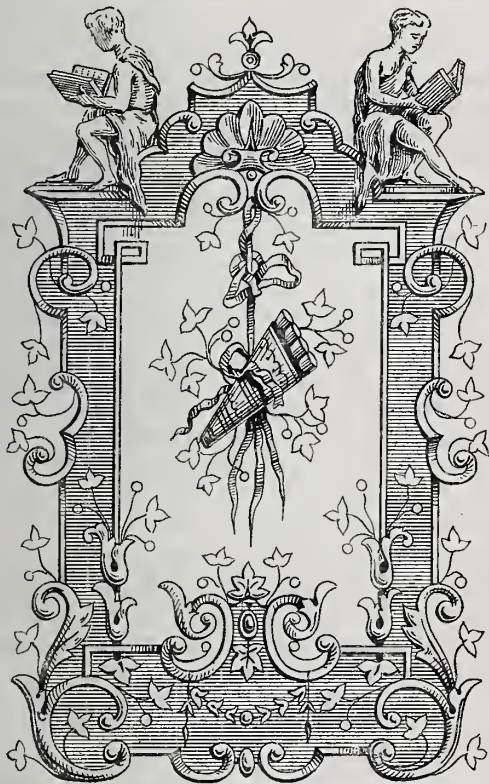


Fig. 12.—Design for a Panel (French).

or Louis-Seize ornament, we find this practice to be carried, in the work of Fay and his contemporary decorators, to the bounds of imitative licence. In wall decorations, in panels and friezes, in cornices, and on the ceilings of the apartments

of the more important public and private buildings, winged arrows, quivers, game both winged and four-footed, jewelled necklaces, human figures, terminating in acanthus scroll work, together with painted representations of carved wood scrolls, sometimes directly analogous to that of the Elizabethan period in England, were all pressed into the service of the ornamentist, and nothing perhaps can more conclusively point to the practical craftsman of the day how necessary it is (to be a master of his art) that he should be able to portray with the skill of an artist the representation of almost any object animate or inanimate with which he meets in his daily life, and a great many, also, with which he may only at rare periods become acquainted.

In Fig. 12 is given an example of this florid style in the form of a decorative panel. The *motif* is pure French, and it is capable of rendition in colours—the outer scroll in gold shaded in sienna, or in rich glowing colour instead of gold, shaded naturally; the space between it and the inner panel might be a choice blue or grey, of course only a tint rather than a decided colour, and the inside panel a pale rich cream tint; the leaves and berries should appear either in their natural tints or in some suitable harmony against the ground, the ribbon supporting the pipes in blue with pink for the reverse side, and the figures at top in natural flesh tints. The general ground tone of the panel (*i.e.* outside the scroll frame) should be a warm salmon hue to harmonise completely with the various details of the design.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON POLYCHROMATIC ORNAMENT IN THE ROUND.



“POLYCHROME” is a term used in the ornamental arts to signify a combination of such a variety of colours as, indeed, is indispensable to carry out particular effects. Any system of decoration in which the representation of *natural* forms is sought for is essentially polychromatic in its character, for whilst conventional ornament may be executed

in one colour only, distinguished of course by working the various parts in the different hues ranging from light to dark, in the rendition of arabesque or Italian ornament, or the representation of landscape or Watteau scenes, nearly the whole range of colours known to the artist may be called into requisition.

In panels of a classic character in which amorini (by which name the chubby figures of Cupid and other figures of boys are generally known), or figures derived from mythological lore, as those of Venus, Diana, Mars, Mercury, &c., are introduced, as well as in the production of sylvan landscape and figures of satyrs, nymphs, and similar groups to that in the initial letter above, a knowledge will be requisite of the art of painting flesh subjects. Although it is given to few to rival the genius of an Etty or a Poynter, at least suffi-

cient study must be accorded to these artistic branches of the decorator's craft in order that he may be enabled to accomplish something fairly representing the subject to be introduced.

Fig. 13 gives an idea of a decorative panel centre in which a foliated scroll forms the setting to a flying figure with a horn, and carrying a palm branch in the left hand, while at the feet of the figure resting upon a curved terminal is a dove, emblematic of peace.



Fig. 13.—Centre for a Panel
(Draped figure and scroll).

In this class of decorative work drapery forms a distinctive feature, and the painting of gracefully flowing robes, as well as the proper portrayal of arms and armour in colours, are subjects to which careful attention must be directed.

See also the drapery study, Ceres, Fig. 40, on page 115, the rendition of which, in

colours, would make an excellent practice.

One of the first considerations in painting ornament "in the round," as distinguished from the flat outlined ornaments produced in stencilling or pencilled work, will be that of light and shade ; and here again arises another important point as to whether the object depicted has to be shown as if bearing a polished or metallic surface or merely as "dead" colouring.

In every object possessing a polished face there are the high light, the natural shadow, the reflected light, and the deep shadow.

In Fig. 14 is given a Roman helmet and sword ; the remarks upon reflected light would bear with special significance upon the painting of this subject, as all objects of

bright metal necessarily have a strong reflected light in addition to the natural shadow.

A dead-coloured object giving no reflection of light is far



Fig. 14.—Armour Trophy (Roman).

simpler to paint, it has no “high” light, and its intensity of shadow is proportionately less. All students of decoration should practise the painting in proper colours of such “bits” of decorative work as they would be likely to see introduced into an apartment as portions of the collective whole, and for that purpose the “practical examples” given will afford useful study, and give the novice some initiatory ideas of the difficulties to be surmounted in reducing them to practice.

If these are properly portrayed in colour on a pattern board, it will prove an invaluable method of learning where these practical difficulties are likely to arise; and on the principle—more often in these days “honoured in the breach than in the observance”—that “practice makes perfect,” the decorator will possess that confidence in himself so necessary to effective work when he commences operations upon the actual apartment he seeks to embellish.

We may then for the present apply ourselves to the reproduction of these examples upon a ground previously prepared, and a great deal of our success will depend upon the amount of care with which the surface has been got up to receive the ornamental figures we design to place upon it.

Where a number of softened shadows are essential to give the desired effect, the softness and consequently the rotundity of the figure will all hinge upon the absolute smoothness of the under surface. A pattern board should be got up with as much nicety as that with which a coach painter would finish the panels of a carriage, and the trouble of rubbing it down with fine glass paper between each coat of paint, and again previously to varnishing, will be amply repaid by the pleasure the operator will feel in working upon it. One of the best possible grounds on which to execute work of this kind is formed by thoroughly "felting down" the first coat of varnish when it has become properly hardened. This is done by the use of pumice powder applied with a piece of felt (about 6 in. by 4 in. in size is the most convenient for handling readily), and then leaving it unvarnished with a second coat until the completion of the pattern. The "half gloss" of this varnished surface forms an admirable body on which to apply the subsequent colours.

The pigments used for ornament in the round are necessarily made up in such a manner that they may dry with sufficient hardness, but yet so slowly that they may be manipulated with perfect ease to give the effect of "softening," which latter is an essential to all naturalistic reproductions. In nature there is no such thing as a *hard* shadow, the outline of all shadows is by atmospheric conditions invariably merged into the general whole, hence the colourist must so blend the shadows into his main colour that the hard outline of the shadow, which would mar the whole effect, shall be in no degree discernible.

That shadows do not affect the shape or general outline of the design, is endeavoured to be shown by diagrams (Figs.

15, 16, 17), which are purposely of the most simple character possible. Let the painter draw upon his pattern board in chalk a rectangular figure as in Fig. 15; if he then blends the colours in shadow form, as in Fig. 16, by a series of



Fig. 15.—Rectangular Outline.



Fig. 16.—The same, shaded.

straight strokes of darker tones of his body colour right across the panel, he at once produces an apparent *roundness* without in any degree interfering with the rectangular outline

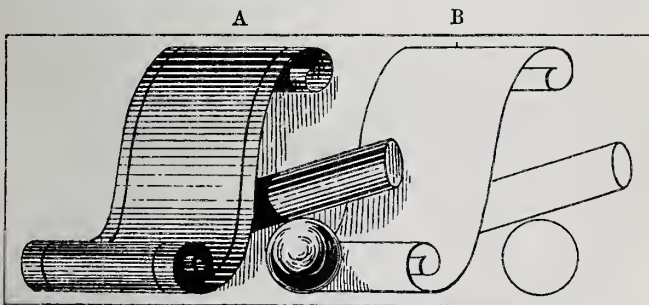


Fig. 17.—Outline and Shadow.

of the figure. It will be noticed that the darker tone is not carried close to the extreme edge on either side of the square, but that a line of light is left at both; this is the reflected light which imparts the rotundity to the figure. This reflected

light will be apparent on all spherical objects, and will be noted in the helmet, Fig. 14, and also in Fig. 17, which shows three other forms of outline; in the one a scroll composed of the simplest possible curves is shadowed in the same way as the rectangular figure just given, while a cylindrical figure resting upon a spherical ball completes the group. It should be noticed that where the cylinder passes behind the scroll, the shadow thrown upon it takes the curve, not of the scroll from whence it is derived, but of the cylinder upon which it falls. The effect of shadow softening is fully seen by comparing these figures (A) with their plain outlines (B) which are placed with them. It will be noted that the mere circle becomes by the effect of shadow a spheroid figure possessing apparent solidity, while the cylindrical example is evolved from a pair of parallel lines meeting an oval at their upper extremities. All the rest is effected by the process of shading.

Having said so much then upon shadow softening, it next behoves us to consider the working of the actual colours, which must, as already said, be slow rather than rapid in drying. For this purpose it will be found advisable that each should be ground in raw linseed oil, a very small proportion of patent driers being added, and that the vehicle used as thinnings should also consist in part of raw oil, a little turpentine and pale hard-drying varnish being added.

Red sable brushes in tin (both flat and round will be found necessary for certain parts of the work) are the most preferable tools, and an oval palette of fair size is another requisite. Oil colours in tubes are both convenient and cleanly, and although dearer in proportion as compared with powder colours which the decorator may himself prepare, they will be found quite as economical in use, for as much need only be put on the palette as the workman may require, thus avoiding waste, and there is also a deal of time and labour saved which would have otherwise to be expended in preparation by the decorator himself.

Some of the colours are in themselves bad driers, and these may be used almost entirely with varnish, as they require something to ensure hardening. Of these burnt sienna is one of the most unreliable as to its drying tendencies, verdigris coming into the same category; lake, black, and Prussian blue are also colours which necessitate a more sparing use of raw oil as a thinning medium.

It is advantageous in practice to use either sugar of lead properly ground up by means of the slab and muller or the best quality of prepared "patent driers" with these semi-transparent pigments. Their opacity is improved by the addition, and that also ensures for them a greater "covering body."

This, of course, does not apply to the reproduction of shadows on gilded work, as in order to preserve the rich lustre of the metal it is then most essential that they should be transparent. In that case, therefore, the operator may find Japan gold size a safe medium to work with, but he will then avoid the use of turpentine, adding only to the gold size a few drops of raw linseed oil and a small proportion of varnish.

In working, a cloth on which to wipe the softening fitch after each application will be necessary. For ordinary work the best of softeners will be found to be a one or one-half inch flat sable in tin; for very broad work a larger size will be requisite. In softening, the dark tones should never be blended into the light, but the light into the dark. As an instance, we will suppose a scroll to be a delicate rich pink, the deep shadows in this would partake of an Indian red tone, but by softening the deep red into the lighter colour much of the delicacy of the pink would be destroyed and the colour would become muddy in appearance. On the other hand if the light be carried too far, or is too much "softened" into the dark, a "milky" shadow will be created which is almost equally objectionable.

There must invariably be a separate brush for each colour,

and the utmost care must be taken that the softening fitch is, as nearly as possible, freed from paint after each application of it to the work in hand.

The colours to be softened should never be allowed actually to touch each other until blended by the flat fitch; they may be brought as close as the sixteenth of an inch towards each other, and then the remainder of the surface may be left to be covered in the process of blending, which commences by drawing the clean softener in a zig-zag manner, so as to catch the inner edge of each of the wet colours, across the work; this gives a kind of scalloped appearance which is speedily turned to a softly blended union of the two colours by further strokes given with precision and firmness straight across, but with extreme lightness of touch. A common mistake of inexperienced workers is to soften too much, to go over and over, backwards and forwards, until the whole becomes a smudgy mass. One or two practised strokes are all that is essential, and the fewer in number the more cleanly will be the appearance, and the less colour will there be to wipe out of the fitch after every application.

Fig. 18 is one of a series of Renaissance frieze subjects for a four-sided apartment, the cameo centre representing spring, the remaining three being also emblematic of the seasons.

In actual practice for mural decoration where it is desired to give roundness by the introduction of light and shade, attention must be paid to the quarter from which daylight is admitted to the apartment. It would be totally contrary to common sense should the darker side of an ornamental combination of scroll work and figures be that immediately contiguous to the stream of light admitted through the window casements. Wherever the natural shadow would fall, were the decorative details reproduced on the wall surface really solid objects instead of painted representations, there should the artist throw his darker colours; attention to this fact would save him from a charge of incongruity and render

his naturalistic treatment of the decoration more effective because not opposed to probability. In the frieze subject, Fig. 18, it will be seen that the light appears to be thrown upon the scroll and figures from the right, and that the shadows are consequently upon the left of the subject, and that a similar arrangement of shadow obtains in the cameo centre. But the artist would not on all four sides of the apartment so place the shadows; on the opposite wall flank the light would be from the *left* and the whole of the shadows upon the *right*, and he would thus secure a rational effect in the disposition of his details. Every dark should be arranged so as to tell against a light, and *vice versa*; this is the true art principle of relief, but the contrasts must be so



Fig. 18.—Frieze Subject (Spring).

balanced that they may not offend the eye by over harshness. If the colours are made to dry fast the process of blending will be rendered extremely difficult, hence it is particularly unsuited for working in flatting. Where it is desired that the decorations shall be finished without the gloss of ordinary oil colours a "flatting oil varnish" is not infrequently used, and this has the effect of entirely removing the lustre of oil paint. It is, however, not unlikely to injuriously affect some pigments by causing them to crack, especially if there be a great deal of artificial heat, such as hot air pipes, &c., in the apartment; its use is therefore not in all instances to be recommended.

Softening is produced in distemper colours by a much simpler process, as the body of the decoration may be put in entirely in the actual or self colour before attempting to impart roundness to the details of the design. Then the parts which are to appear in shadow may be gone over with the shade tone at leisure. A slightly damped hog-hair fitch will readily blend light and dark distemper tints, the shadow being allowed to dry before the blending is commenced.

In distemper work it will be, moreover, essential to bear in mind the relative tones as they will appear when dry, as in process of application in their wet state they are very much darker than they will be as a finished effect. It would thus be an unnecessary expenditure of time to soften dark into light by the same processes as we have recommended in the case of oil colours, for when the distemper tones are thoroughly dry they may perhaps lose somewhat of the effect intended. But by the simpler method of allowing each tone to dry and then adopting the same course with its shade or intensity it can be seen at once whether the contrast of light and shadow is sufficient, and nothing then remains but the very easy operation of softening with the slightly moistened fitch before mentioned.

With ordinary care some excellent effects of softening colours may be produced when stencilling in distemper by using two stencil brushes, and a third for the blending, keeping it as clean as possible, and rubbing it lightly on the work before removing the stencil plate.

CHAPTER IX.

ORNAMENT IN POLYCHROME. FLESH PAINTING.



“SOFTENING,” or blending colours for the purpose of producing the effects of roundness and solidity, is of course carried to great perfection in the representation of natural and animate forms as introduced in panels for the decoration of wall surfaces ; but it is also largely practised by sign and glass writers in the execution of “blocked ” or softened-

shaded letters, and in the production of such illuminated capitals as the initial at the head of this chapter, which would, like several others in this volume, be especially suited to work of this class, either in the form of glass tablets or sign-boards. In decoration proper, the use of illuminated capitals is often advisable where inscriptions upon a frieze, &c., are introduced. In the ornamentation of churches or other ecclesiastical design, the illuminated capitals are often the chief feature of the work. Yet not any of these comparatively minor effects could be produced without a true appreciation of the art of softening and blending colours.

If, for instance, desirous of introducing a pastoral scene suited to the boudoir or the drawing-room, such as were largely used during the luxurious period of the Bourbon dynasty in the palaces and châteaux of France, the decorator

should possess the *feeling* of an artist coupled with the more extended aptitude for the proper disposition of colours essential to the decorator.

The most difficult task in all classic or idyllic scenes is the painting of "flesh" subjects. There is a general rule followed by artists that the complexions of male figures should be deeper in tone than those of the females. This may have originated in the desire to make the former serve as a setting to the pictorial presentments of a Venus or a Juno by force of contrast, and is in many instances carried to a great excess. In the portrayal of Bacchanalian scenes the figure of the bibulous deity is invariably given a deeper tone than those of the nymphs, whose complexion partakes of a pleasing transparency as a counterfoil to the swarthy hues of the satyrs which generally form a portion of the subject of the panel, while the amorini are chiefly noticeable for a rosy chubbiness of colour and outline. A gaunt or hollow-cheeked Cupid would be an anomaly not to be tolerated.

In some paintings by even our leading artists of the modern school this contrast of complexion is especially marked, as in a painting belonging to the National Collection at South Kensington Museum, where the god Mars exhibits the swarthy frame of a Red Indian and Venus has all the graceful pink of a fashionable blonde. It will therefore be understood that in the list of colours introduced in this chapter as suited to the practice of flesh painting only those which form a medium complexion are given. As they may be modified either by heightening or reducing the respective tints, they are the most suited to the present purpose of giving an outline for general instruction.

It is usual in most instances for the decorator to make a preliminary sketch of his panel subject. This has a twofold advantage, for he can submit his ideas in practical form to the judgment of his patron and make any suggested modification that may be requisite; and, above these essential

matters, he has the advantage of working as much to a set plan with the artistic portions as with the minor effects of the decorative whole.

A panel sketch may be either drawn and shaded up in ordinary lead pencil, or it may be sent in as a pen-and-ink sketch, similar to those shown in facsimile at Figs. 9, 10, 28, 39, &c., which are really reproductions of actual sketches so submitted to a patron to give him an idea of the suggested manner in which it may be proposed to finish the details. It will be conceded that the sketches are quite sufficient for the purpose mentioned, and save considerable time which would otherwise be given over to verbal explanation of the decorator's ideas. Better still, if the customer is willing to incur the slight additional charge necessary as a reimbursement to the decorator for his trouble, a water-colour drawing of the subject may be prepared, and this possesses the additional recommendation that it may be afterwards used as a working copy. Affixed to the wall on which the artist is working (by a simple drawing pin or two) at the left hand of the operator, it will be of invaluable assistance in the "painting in" of the subject, especially if it has been drawn to something like a proportionate scale.

The best ground for laying in a landscape or figure subject will be found a "broken grey" made by adding to white lead a small quantity of raw umber; just sufficient, in fact, to take off the purity of the white is all that is required, and care should be taken that it has no "oiliness" of surface or gloss, which would render some of the lighter-bodied colours likely to "ciss" or roll off in ridges; this is particularly necessary in such cases as those in which glazing or washes of transparent colours are likely to be found of advantage in obtaining a particular effect. Should the decorator find himself compelled to contend against the disadvantage referred to, it will be necessary to "damp down" the surface to be worked upon by going over it with a nearly dry and very soft sponge; this will counteract in a measure the excess

of "oiliness," and enable him to work with tolerable comfort. On the other hand, "flatting" or dead paint would prove inconvenient from its liability to rub up under the application of colour in which turpentine forms a proportion of the thinning medium. As a rule, it is well to rub down the painted surface with fine glass paper to remove any dust which may have adhered to it while drying. The outlines of the subject, whether it be a landscape, a group, or even a single figure, should be distinctly traceable even after the "first painting," and may be either drawn with a lead pencil or charcoal on the ground colour, or, better still, they may be transferred from an outline sketch drawn to the actual size of the panel. For this purpose the subject should be carefully reproduced on thin paper, and the paper well rubbed on its under surface with finely powdered charcoal, powdered light purple brown, or even the end of a block of ordinary solid blacklead as used for domestic purposes may be found occasionally useful. The paper so prepared and containing the sketch will then be carefully affixed, by the aid of drawing pins, in the proper position on the painted surface, and the whole "marked in" with a well-pointed pencil; or an agate point, such as used for writing manifold copies by the aid of carbonised paper, will be found of the greatest value. On removing the sketch the design will be found, more or less correctly, as the skill or care shown in going over it with the "point" may determine, traced upon the working surface beneath.

In mere outlined ornament a very good method is practised for obtaining duplicates of a design by "pricking out" the ornament with a needle point and "pouncing" it upon the work. This process, which is not so suitable for landscape or figure work, has been fully dealt with in the treatise on Elementary Decoration.*

As in all subjects of the nature now under our con-

"Elementary Decoration," chapter iii. page 19.

sideration the background first requires to be worked upon, we have yet to amplify our traced outline, and by rendering it more permanent, preclude the possibility of obliterating any portion of it while engaged on other parts of the surface.

This end is attained by the use of a small quantity of raw umber and burnt sienna, thoroughly ground, and well thinned down with gold size and boiled oil, to which a little turpentine is added, until it becomes semi-transparent. With this medium, using a fine round sable fitch for the purpose, the decorator will then go carefully over the traced outlines of all the objects in the foreground of his picture, "roughing in" at the same time the foliage of trees, &c., and by the application of a few broad touches defining the shadows, for the proper position of which he has only to direct his eyes occasionally to the finished water-colour sketch which we have supposed him to have placed above the left-hand corner of his picture. At this stage he will find it best to suspend operations until sufficient time has elapsed for his colours to get dry, and generally speaking it may be convenient not to go on until the following day.

Having completed the outlines, the decorator has next to turn his attention to the background, and the nature of this must be ruled by two considerations, since it will, when viewed as a detail only of the general scheme of decoration, add to or detract from the appearance of other portions of the work. The first consideration to the artist is how much or how little will a particular background enhance the appearance of the figures in his composition; to the decorator that consideration must of necessity be of the second importance, and his first will be in how great a degree will the other embellishments of the room be affected by a particular tone prevailing within the limits spaced out for the pictorial enrichment.

For instance, if the wall surface on which the pictorial panel appears is of a warm salmon or pink tone, it would not

do to introduce the roseate hues of a summer sunset, unless the decorative framework surrounding the picture panel be so balanced in colour, whether painted on the wall surface or of a material kind, as to counterbalance the destruction of the harmonious contrast. Similarly a cerulean sky of Italian uniformity of tint would not be appropriately set off by a surrounding surface in which blue formed the predominant feature. For this reason the cameos peculiar to the Italian or Florentine school of design, in which figures, groups, animals, heads, musical and pastoral objects, &c., are represented in monotint upon a solid background, are often more appropriate to the uses of the decorator than the finest gems of scenic painting.

In the cameos of the Raffaello school of decoration white figures on a ground of blue, green, or pink were often introduced, the raised appearance of the figures being obtained by softening the shadows into the ground surface. Fig. 19 is a cameo subject, a wood nymph, which could be rendered in white upon either of the grounds mentioned, the shadowing up of the figure being worked in a lighter hue of the ground tone.



Fig. 19.—Cameo Subject.

Returning to the work before us, we may, having arranged our background to harmonise with the other decorations of the apartment, proceed to paint it in, taking care to work *up* to, but not *over* more than need be, the brown tinted outlines of the figure subjects in the foreground.

It will be convenient to give a list of the colours which may be required for this part of the work (the whole of which should be upon the bench in the middle of the room we may be working in), and from which the decorator may transfer to his palette such as may be necessary.

COLOURS FOR BACKGROUND.

<i>Black.</i>	<i>Red.</i>	<i>Yellow.</i>
Blue.	Indian.	Ochre.
Lamp.	Vermilion.	Chromes (1, 2, 3).
<i>Brown.</i>		<i>Blue.</i>
Umber (Raw and Burnt).		Prussian Cobalt.
Vandyke.		Ultramarine.

These would all be utilised in making up particular tints, which again are modified or reduced by the addition of *white*—the latter pigment is of course a *sine quâ non* in all lists of decorative requirements. Following are the three principal combinations:—

<i>Olive.</i>	<i>Purple.</i>	<i>Green.</i>
Raw Umber.	Blue Black.	Blue Black.
Prussian Blue.	Indian Red,	Yellow Ochre,
	or	or
White.	Vermilion.	Chrome.

In those cases where the figures occupy the whole of the panel, their heights being nearly equal to that of the picture opening, it is manifestly unnecessary to do more than make the background simply one of light and shade; in this case burnt umber and white will be most useful, merely rubbing over it thinly and giving an after glaze where desirable of transparent colour—that is, of Vandyke or raw sienna. The use of the ground colours supplied by any good firm of artist's colourmen in collapsible leaden tubes is to be preferred for all the more minute details of decorative work, for the reasons given in the preceding chapter. It will therefore be understood that colours so prepared are referred to in the lists above given.

The painting of flesh figures demands careful study, and proficiency is only attainable by long practice and close observation. Nevertheless it would be idle for a decorative student to go the wrong way to work, and expect thereby to achieve a result worthy of a master. There are certain rules upon which we may for the moment glance as affording an opening on the way to preliminary practice.

The painting of the human figure cannot be properly completed at one operation ; sometimes even three distinct paintings may be necessary, according as the situation of the work may necessitate a greater or less degree of delicacy or artistic finish.

On a frieze, for instance, we should not devote the same amount of minute detail, nor aim at the same delicacy of treatment as we might consider indispensable for the rendition of flesh subjects upon a wall panel.

In the first painting the colour should be laid in broadly, using for the purpose flat sable fitches in tin, and frequently, as the work progresses, softening gently by the aid of a badger-hair softener, or by a light touch with a dry hog-hair fitch.

The first palette consists entirely of body colours (*i.e.* the pigments are opaque, as distinguished from the transparent or glazing tints required for the second painting), and are made up in three combinations: (1) flesh tint, (2) half tint, and (3), shadow.

Using an oval palette board the decorator would do well to arrange these tints in their proper order, in this way:—

On one side of the palette farthest from him leave a clear space (which being immediately under the eye of the operator affords an opportunity for making additional mixed tints, and comparing them readily with the painting), then tints No. 1, 2, and 3, in their regular rotation, so that the third tint would be on the side nearest his body, and in the centre of the palette the white, with which to modify, heighten, or reduce the three main tints.

The same rules will apply to the transparent colours required for the second palette, the uses of which are to deepen, where necessary, the shadows, improve the depth or warmth of the general tints, and to heighten or bring out the reflected lights. The half tint of the first palette is a grey, which is made colder or warmer as circumstances require.

The glazing colours do not of course come into use until

the first painting has become properly dry. Appended is a list of the various tints showing the colours of which they are composed.

COLOURS FOR FLESH FIGURES.

First Palette.—(Opaque Colours.)

1. Naples Yellow. Vermilion.	2. Raw Umber. Prussian Blue.
3. Burnt Umber. Indian Red. Black.	4. White.

Second Palette.—(Transparent Colours).

1. Naples Yellow. Crimson Lake.	2. Cobalt.
3. Vandyke. Prussian Blue. Ivory Black.	4. White.

For the third painting (should it be necessary) a selection from both the preceding will be useful with the addition of lake and ultramarine in the 3rd, or shadow tint.

It will occasionally occur that the flesh will appear to lose colour as the painting approaches completion; in that event it may be readily intensified by the "glazing" process, viz. rubbing over it some transparent colour.

Should it, however, appear too obtrusive, the tone may be lowered by a thin coat of semi-opaque colour, the application of which is technically known to artists as "scumbling."

In "laying in" colours the brush should be held firmly, and each stroke should deliver the body of colour with squareness and precision.

The thinning medium for first painting is generally light drying oil, a vehicle which, however, may be advantageously assisted in its action of hardening the artist's pigments by the addition of a small proportion of sugar of lead in the

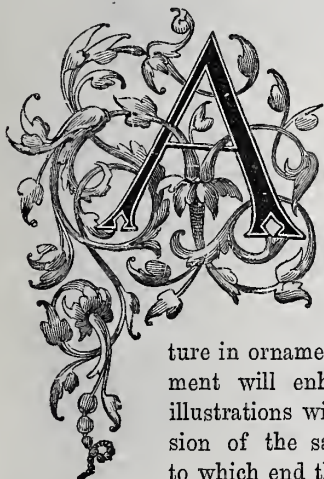
form of solution ; indeed for decorative work, in which nearly always time is an object of consideration, some additional drying medium is an absolute essential to the progress of the work. The artist having his studio at his disposal can afford to "play" with his subject, to touch and retouch, and doubtless thereby improve his effects until they approach perfection ; but the decorator labours under the disadvantage that his work is performed in an apartment, which "must be ready" for occupation at a stated time ; the rapid hardening of his work is therefore of vital importance.

In the second painting linseed oil, turpentine, and a proportion of light copal varnish is a good medium for the dipper, and will materially aid progress by its drying properties.

The use of common dark varnishes is to be avoided in this as in all other branches of the decorator's craft where delicacy of tone is the principal consideration, and for the same reason the use of ordinary Japan gold size is inadmissible. "Patent driers" also should on no account be added to the pigments used in work of the kind before us ; its density and its liability to discoloration equally militate against its utility in the higher branches of decoration.

CHAPTER X.

TECHNICAL TERMS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF VARIOUS STYLES AND PERIODS OF ORNAMENT, ETC.



ALTHOUGH the remarks contained in this chapter cannot be extended to the dimensions of a glossary of art, which would in fact require an entire volume to do it justice, it may be advisable at this stage to advert more particularly to some of the leading technicalities of nomenclature in ornament.

The alphabetical arrangement will enhance its utility, while the illustrations will help to convey an impression of the salient features of each style, to which end they have been introduced.

ASSYRIAN.—A style probably borrowed from the Egyptian. Modern knowledge of this description of ornament is derived from the discoveries at Nineveh and Nimroud, and is remarkable as giving us the earliest trace of the uses of lozenge-shaped diapers, the geometrical arrangement of lines to cover wall surfaces, and adaptations of the lotus flower. The lozenge diaper forms the subject of the engraving (Fig. 20). Compare this diaper with the handle of the paddle on page 5 (Fig. 2).

ARABIAN (or MORESQUE).—The chief examples of this decoration are found in the palace of the Moors at Granada. It is a free flowing system of interlacing scrolls, worked so as to cover the whole surface of the decorated space. The Moors never allowed any gaps or intervening spaces, crowding every part with decorations, in their efforts to preserve a



Fig. 20.—Assyrian Diaper.

general tone irrespective of the number of colours introduced in the details, which generally had for their starting point

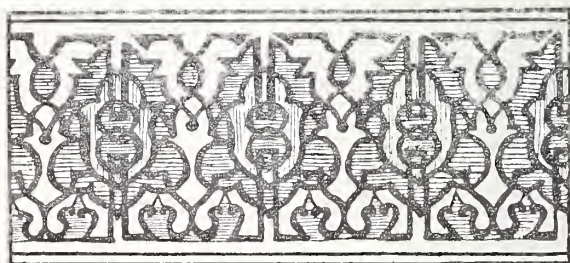


Fig. 21.—Arabian Border Pattern.

an interlacement formed by the crossing of two squares, while curvilinear decorations are often broken by a straight line. Turkish, Moresque, and Arabian, which are regarded as distinct styles, had each this peculiarity, although in Turkish ornament the rules that curves should flow from a main stem were often ignored. Fig. 21 is a pattern from the Alhambra.

ARABESQUE is a system of decoration in which the interlacement of knots, bouquets, flowers, and leaves is the dominant principle. Several examples of this style have been given. The scrolls are generally heavily foliated, and the various parts spring naturally from the main curve. Raffaello, Theodore de Bry, Baccio Pintelli, and other great masters of the Italian and German schools, have handed down to posterity some marvellously beautiful compositions of this character. Those of the first named in the Vatican at Rome have been objects of emulation to students of all time, although it is stated on the authority of Hittorff they are themselves founded upon the yet more ancient productions of buried Pompeii. Calices of flowers, human figures, views of buildings, vases, animals, &c., were all introduced into work of this kind, and it possesses this essential difference to modern decorative design, that each detail had a foundation and support in the general starting point of the design, not the meaningless jumbling together of a number of unconnected objects such as often now passes current for

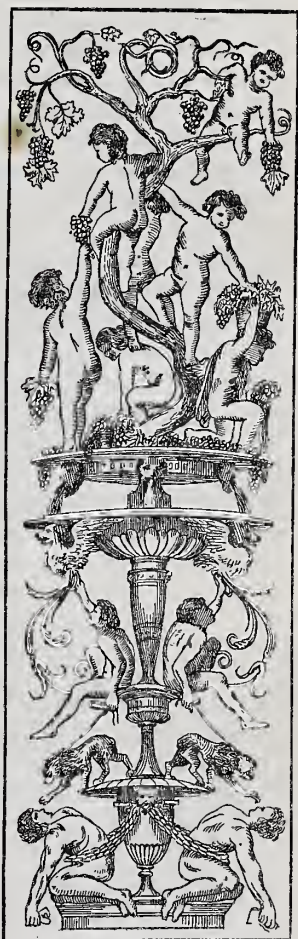


Fig. 22.—Arabesque. Portion of Pilaster at the Vatican, by Raffaello.

originality. Fig. 22 is a portion of a design in Arabesque scroll, taken from a pilaster in the Loggia of the Vatican.

It will be seen from the particular character of this subject how valuable to the decorator, not less than to the artist, is that study of flesh painting, to which attention is directed in the preceding chapter, while the natural branches and leaves with their wealth of fruit demand painstaking skill on the part of those who seek to emulate the graceful fancy of the great master of decoration. The subject is readily apparent, since the amorini, who are actively engaged in plucking the ripe fruit, appear to be seconded in their work by others who are pressing the juice beneath their feet, whence it runs into a vessel below, through orifices in the grotesque heads beneath the basin. Thence we may suppose the wine to run to the figures below, who are dipping it into drinking cups, in which proceeding they are somewhat disturbed by the frolicsome proclivities of the tailless quadrupeds held by two other figures. In this as in all the work of Raffaele somewhat of a connected interest is maintained throughout the various groupings of the ornament.

BYZANTINE.—The ornament of ancient Byzantium. It is really a compound of various styles which had preceded it. The acanthus scroll, with a terminal somewhat similar to the conventional “rose” pattern, is a characteristic of the style. This simple rose (Fig. 23) has therefore survived since the age of Justinian—2,300 years—and is still called into daily requisition by the modern craftsman.



Fig. 23.—Byzantine. Rose Terminal.

CELTIC. — Ancient British ornament, remarkable for its extremely intricate interlacements, and absolute absence of

foliated scroll work or leaf details, is almost invariably geometrical in character, and generally so minute that its beauties are only done justice to by inspection through a magnifying glass. It abounds with the most contorted renderings of animals and birds, having tails so intertwined and knotted as to require some patience to trace them out to their terminals. Many of the interlaced lines are suited to modern uses, forming excellent borders, &c., for panels and similar work. Fig. 24 is taken from an ancient manuscript (enlarged) ;

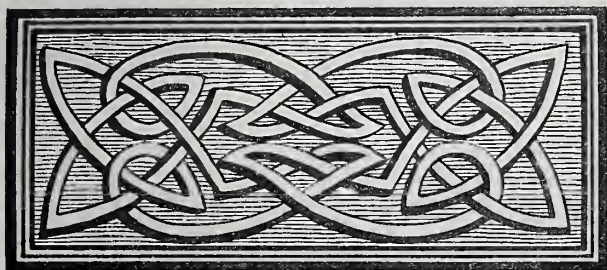


Fig. 24.—Celtic. Interlacement of Lines.

it conveys the idea, but is singular among so many tortuous combinations for its extreme simplicity.

CHINESE.—The attention which has of late been directed to the art workmanship of the Chinese renders their peculiarities of style tolerably familiar to those who have been fortunate enough to visit their “pavilion” in the several exhibitions which have taken place at South Kensington. It will be considered, however, that the Chinaman is more at home, and displays far greater ability, as a carver of elaborate designs in wood and ivory than as a painter, if the specimens seen at the exhibitions may fairly be accepted as a criterion of their efforts in this direction. Beyond a remarkable facility in arranging the disposition of contrasting colours, often of the brightest and most decided hues, the work of these oriental craftsmen is rough and crude in the extreme.

Owen Jones even went so far as to remark that they were in regard to their "conception of pure form" very far "behind the New Zealander." But in their arrangement of bright and attractive tints, such as pale blues, emerald green, and pink composed largely of the purest vermilion by admixture with white, the modern decorator may accord them attention to his advantage.



Fig. 25.—Chinese. Part of a Diaper Pattern.

The example engraved (Fig. 25) will, however, tend to show that in regard to making flowing ornament tangential to and radiating from the principal stem, they are not far behind their prototypes of the West. In the design given the flat curve breaks into a floral terminal, which is coloured in various hues of pink and yellow, white being also sparingly introduced in parts. The ground is one of those peculiarly brilliant but pale blue tones for which the almond-eyed Celestial is so generally renowned. Some of their contrasting colours may be given. Deep

red upon cream ground. Cream tint upon medium green. Dark blue upon green. Green, red, blue, yellow, and subsidiary tints of the same upon gold. White, red, and gold upon deep blue. Red upon drab (sienna, raw umber, and white mixed). White upon green. Green, yellow, and white upon drab—and many others. Having but very imperfect knowledge of perspective, their decoration seldom compre-

hends natural grouping, and their greatest success is in the arrangement of geometrical detail, in the colouring of which, as will be evident from the instances given, they excel.

EGYPTIAN.—The conventional treatment of the lotus flower and the papyrus plant was the leading feature of this style. The two in combination formed the shafting and capitals of columns in architecture, and appear in all their mural paintings. They were singular in possessing no frieze or any place answering thereto, nor does the arch appear in any of their architecture or decorations. The colours of their painted surfaces were red, blue, yellow, black, and white, sometimes green for the leaves of the lotus plant, but not invariably. The hues were of the brightest, as the ancient decorators of Thebes appear to have ignored the use of all intermediary tones. In the representation of water they simply painted a number of zigzag lines in a parallel direction, and from these depicted growing stalks and flowers; the tones are always surface colours, no attempt at shadow being introduced. Fig. 26 is a composition made up of some of these peculiarities of the style. It could be adapted to a dado, and if the leading principle be kept throughout would

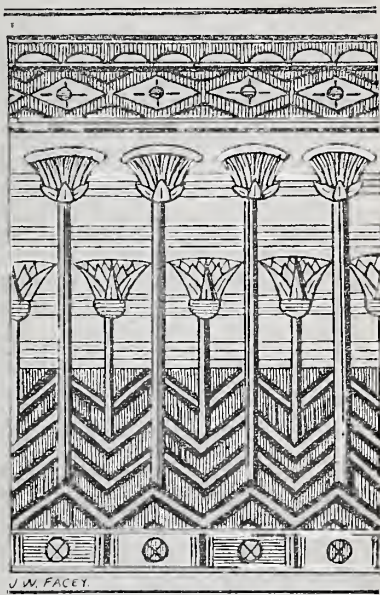


Fig. 26.—Egyptian. Dado Design.

Fig. 26 is a composition made up of some of these peculiarities of the style. It could be adapted to a dado, and if the leading principle be kept throughout would

have a by no means displeasing effect. The lower border is a series of oblong rectangular panels coloured red and yellow alternately, the "boss" or crossed circle alternating in the two colours also. The serrated lines are in pale blue on a deeper blue and have a red edge on either side, the stalks of the lotus (the shorter) are green, the flower yellow and red, the papyri (the taller stalks) yellow, outlined with green and red for the heads, the background above the waves is a warm stone colour. The upper border is green with the diamond squares yellow, outlined red, the semicircular compartments above are grey on a blue ground. The dividing lines are white or cream colour.

ELIZABETHAN.—This can hardly be designated a "style" of ornament. It is little more than a subdivision of the Italian and Dutch schools, but lacking the freedom and grace of the first named. Pure Elizabethan ornament, if such there was, could only have been the rendition by English artists of such ideas as had been previously introduced into the country by Holbein, Penni, Toto, and John of Padua, with others who found employment about the court and the houses of the nobles of the period. The chief feature of decorations of this period were the boldness of execution,

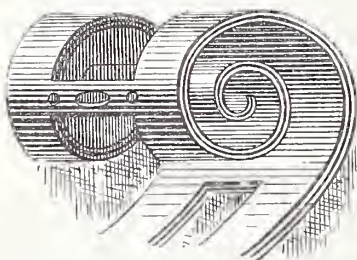


Fig. 27.—Elizabethan. Perforated Scroll.

and the use of perforated and curled scrolls and bands, often ingeniously interlaced and possessing therein some analogy to the earlier Celtic ornament.

Fig. 27 is a sketch of one of the perforated scrolls referred to. The perforated scroll work belonging to the Eliza-

bethan period of art is especially suited to the purposes of forming a frame for a decorated panel of a pictorial character,

and is often so found in the finest examples of seventeenth and eighteenth century interiors, although relieved of much of the massive character of the original by being more lightly drawn, and by the introduction of free flowing foliage and gracefully pendent floral wreaths, festoons of beaded work, and wavy ribbons intertwining through the perforations of the scroll and supporting, or being supported by, its principal curves.

FRENCH.—This is a generic term applied as often as not to the Renaissance period and to the work of the Italian



Fig. 28.—French. Original Design for a Panel in the Watteau manner.

school in France during the reigns of Louis XIV., XV., and XVI. It is remarkable for the richness and freedom of its style, and for its choice of pastoral and idyllic subjects; the latter by Watteau have been universally admired. These figure and landscape views were introduced into decorative panels on walls and ceilings with abundant profusion of birds, flowers, &c. Fig. 28 is an original sketch embracing a view in the Watteau manner. The main scroll might be painted in a rich purple tint upon a ground of warm salmon hue (not too pink) and the flowers and birds coloured naturally, as

also the medallion subject. The style is suited to the purposes of drawing-room and boudoir decoration. See also Fig. 5 on page 34.

GREEK.—The decorations of ancient Greece are principally founded upon the “honeysuckle,” as the moderns have elected



Fig. 29.—Greek.
Honeysuckle Pattern.

to term it, from a fancied resemblance to that flower. It appears in nearly all work of the best period of Greek art. The Greek “fret” or key pattern is too well known to need remark in this place. Fig. 29 is a honeysuckle from a Greek border. In colouring, brown on black grounds, or black ornaments on brown grounds, were, to a great extent, the prevalent taste, but gold ornaments on tones of red and blue were also used. Themes of decoration founded upon Greek

motifs will always prove satisfactory, and a thorough knowledge of this class of ornament is an essential to the modern craftsman.

GROTESQUE.—A system of free-hand ornament, in which the human figure is often made to terminate in foliated scrolls, together with winged monsters bearing more or less resemblance to zoological forms, such as dogs, squirrels, monkeys, goats, birds, &c., and such mythical figures as minotaurs, satyrs, dragons, griffins, and so on, are found intermingled with twisted branches, from which spring parasitical and climbing plants, flowers, and fruits. Cameos bearing effigies of all kinds, and trophies of arms, &c., are also incorporated in the design. The various forms are sometimes treated in natural tones on surfaces of plain colour, and often in monotint. In the latter class of work shaded white scroll work

upon blue grounds or cream tinted upon red are the most usual combinations. "Grotesque" is really a subdivision of the style generally designated "Italian," to which also Arabesque ornament belongs. When the ornament is painted upon a white or pale cream-tinted ground work in pale blue



Fig. 30.—Grotesque. Scroll Figure Terminals.

tints shaded up in a darker tone it is sometimes called "Porcelain." Oak leaves and branches intertwined, painted in deep yellow on blue ground, were known as "Cerquate." Fig. 30 gives an illustration of the foliated terminals to the human figure common in the "Grotesques" of the Italian decorators.

HINDOO.—But little is known of this, but the remarks upon Indian decoration will be applicable in a measure to the earlier efforts of the races of India.

INDIAN ornament is distinguished mainly for its rich colours and lavish employment of gold. It abounds with rich conventionalised flowers painted upon flat surfaces in the most brilliant hues. In form it partakes of the Arabian and Persian, and ornament placed upon a ground of contrasting colour is always separated by a light or dark line, according to the tone of the work. If on a gold ground the same plan is adopted, but where gold details appear upon colour grounds the brilliancy of the metal itself defines the

form. These are rules that decorators at home may remember

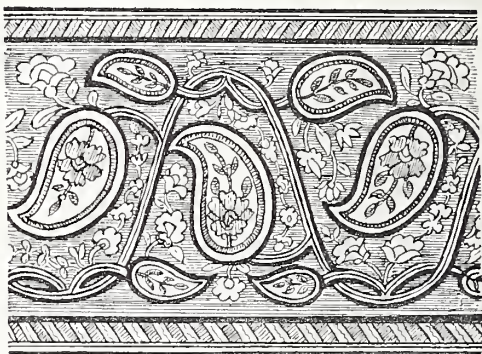


Fig. 31.—Indian. Ornamental Border Pattern.

with profit. Fig. 31 is a portion of an Indian border ornament taken from a hookah in the India Museum, London.

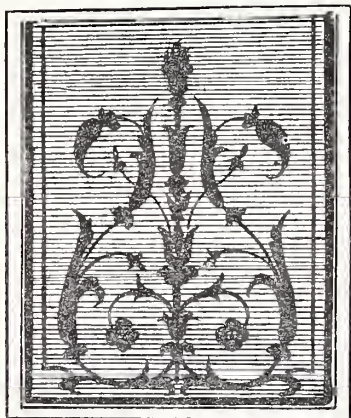


Fig. 32.—Italian. Scroll Terminal for Panel.

ITALIAN.—This style has been commented upon in connection with its leading subdivisions. See Arabesque, French, Renaissance, and Grotesque. Fig. 32 is a suggestion for a panel terminal in the free flowing scroll ornament of the Italian school; rendered either in flat tints or in the round, it would make an effective decoration.

JAPANESE.—A comparatively recent introduction, can

hardly be classed with the great leading systems of ornament. It depends entirely for its effect on the oddity of its compositions, which evince no knowledge of perspective or the relative gradation of tints for atmospheric effect. Notwithstanding, it has had a marked influence on the modern decorator,

who finds his patrons often more ready to accept a design based upon a Japanese *motif* than the conventionalised schemes of art decoration. It cannot be termed art, for it has no "leading idea" to be acted up to, as in more cultivated systems; its very "haphazardous" arrangement of parts appearing, in point of fact, to please the modern taste, jaded as it has been for years by set conventionalities. Fig. 33, by E. Hoyle, displays some of the leading features of the style. In nearly all the larger compositions of the native Japanese artists the burning volcano, Tusi Yama, is a conspicuous feature, while storks, flamingoes, butterflies, and small birds are freely introduced without any meaning or readily perceptible relation to the design or to each other.



Fig. 33.—Japanesque. A Design for a Screen.

MEDIEVAL.—The decoration of the 12th to 15th century. It is distinguished by the wealth of diaper patterns and by the absence of the heavily foliated scroll-work of the Greeks and Romans. The richness of the colours is another matter for remark, crimson and gold, green, blue, and other strong tones being used in the decorations of walls, tombs, hangings and illuminated books. In many of the painted diapers of the 14th century, the pattern was often rendered in gold on a bright green or red ground, and we have in them a leaf pattern without any attempt at the scroll supports with which the ornament of other periods is usually painted. For the best examples of the ornament of the Middle Ages we must go to the illuminated manuscripts which have been the admiration of posterity, and the splendid specimens of stained glass which yet remain as objects of reverence to the student of decoration, for in these it is acknowledged these early craftsmen excelled all the best efforts of their successors.

PERSIAN ornament abounds in conventional flowers in groups and on panels and borders. The use of secondary

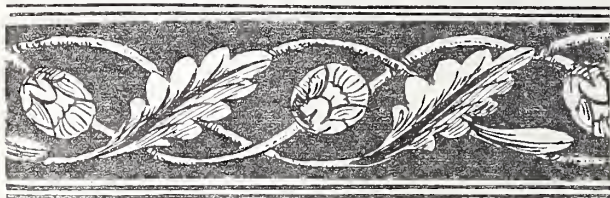


Fig. 34.—Persian. Leaf Border.

and tertiary tints in most examples of the style renders it very suitable to bedroom decoration, where, as mentioned on page 35, the brightness and “prettiness” of appearance is an undoubted advantage. Although much influenced so far as geometrical design is concerned by their Arabian neighbours, the Persians went much nearer nature in their embel-

ishments, the flowers introduced into them being sometimes shaded and coloured in a natural manner. Fig. 34 is a border from an old print.

POMPEIIAN.—It has been said that almost any scheme of colour decoration might be supported by authority from Pompeii, but there is one feature about the ornament of the city of Pliny, that therein we find the almost universal use of a dado and panelled wall. The dado was commonly about one-sixth the height of the wall, and was often divided perpendicularly by pilasters, on the panels between which



Fig. 35.—Pompeian. A Stencilled Border.

graceful combinations of pencilled ornament appeared, and were rendered with a freedom of execution that has seldom been excelled by later artists. The common arrangement of colour in a Pompeian house was a black dado with red pilasters united by a band of the same colour, the wall filling being either white or stone colour with decorations in bright tones upon it. Their colours were generally violently contrasted, but were reduced in harshness of effect by lines and fillets of intermediary hues, and they often completely reversed the theory of receding tones by painting the frieze

black, the panels red, and the dado yellow. This is "topsy-turveydom," indeed! Pompeian decorators were well acquainted with the use of the stencil plate, with which, in fact, much of their work was carried out; the border at Fig. 35 is a stencilled pattern from the frieze of a Pompeian house. The "ties" are shown in the engraving, but the ancient craftsmen were quite as punctilious in covering them in, so as to conceal the joints of the stencil plate, as the most careful of modern workmen. More correct taste has of late inclined to the retention of the ties, and if they are symmetrically arranged they will even enhance the appearance of a stencilled ornament in many instances.

RENAISSANCE.—Italian ornament has been treated under the head of Arabesque, &c. The term signifies the "revival"

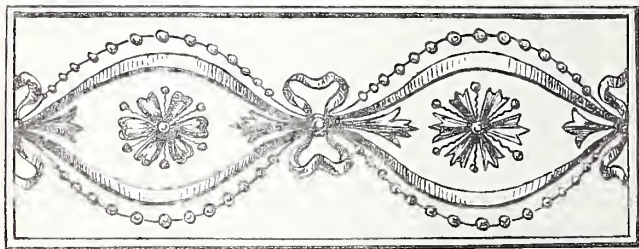


Fig. 36.—Renaissance. Bead and Riband Border.

of artistic culture based upon the examples of the ancients. Cimabue, Giotto, and Andrea Mantegna were the pioneers of this reawakening of an art love that had long slumbered, and aroused their countrymen to a sense of all that was beautiful and noble in the art of decorative painting. Fig. 36 gives an illustration of a border in the festooned style, popular towards the close of the 16th century. Very similar are some of the characteristic forms of the Adams style, which were generally rendered in *basso relievo* on plaster or composition grounds.

ROMAN.—The ornament of the Romans was largely founded

upon the acanthus leaf as conventionalised by their predecessors the Greeks ; it enters into all their decorations, sculptured and painted alike ; it is the precursor of the earlier English foliated scrolls, and had a great influence upon the making of mediæval styles. The acanthus lends itself to almost any position in ornament, hence its general application. Fig. 37 is an outline of the leaf as conventionally treated ; it is the “starting point” of all Roman foliated scroll work.



Fig. 37.—Roman. Outline of the conventional Acanthus Leaf.

CHAPTER XI.

ORNAMENT IN POLYCHROME.—THE STUDY OF DESIGN.



THE application of colours to decoration is a subject upon which it is scarcely possible to write an exhaustive treatise, possessing as it does so many complex combinations and so various an array of details. These pages may, however, make both the practice and theory of polychromy intelligible to the beginner, while supplying

the practical painter with an occasional hint.

One of the commonest commentaries made upon entering a newly decorated apartment by amateur and practical worker alike is, generally speaking, a reference to the suitability or otherwise of the details to the purpose they were intended to serve. The standards of taste, good, bad, and indifferent, of the critics, may bring various theories of ornamentation into conflict in determining the precise degree of success attained by the designer, and it would be too much to expect that even the most painstaking master of his craft could satisfy the requirements of every observer; but in the one word "taste" lies a talisman to success which no practical decorator can reasonably ignore.

Suitability, or appropriateness, in decoration may be divided into several distinct heads—thus, the avoidance of over-

crowding of details belongs to the category of design, and its converse may consist in an over-elaboration of a good ornamental subject or a puerile repetition of a bad one, until the eye becomes wearied by a monotony which may, perhaps, have been by the ignorance of the workman mistaken for harmony.

Another error of design would be (and in practice this most frequently occurs) the introduction of details too minute to be easily discernible when placed in their position as embellishments to particular portions of the apartment. Where so great a variety of often excellent designs in ready cut stencils are procurable, this mistake is more frequently to be noted. The painter, who for the occasion is transformed by the laying aside of his pound brush, and the taking up of a stencil plate and straight-edge, into a fully fledged decorator, selects what he takes to be a "a pretty pattern." This is enough for his judgment, and without more ado he at once proceeds to rub the design on to the flat of the ceiling or into the cove of a cornice twelve or fourteen feet, or more, from the floor. Then he descends from the steps to look up at his work, and discovers that all the "pretty" part of the stencil is lost by being too closely intermingled with the main pattern; the details which "made" the design, in an artistic sense, when he looked at it closely are simply thrown away by being too far removed from the observer, and instead of his beautiful pattern he sees what would appear to the uninitiated to be merely a blurred combination of colour without plan or any definite meaning.

On the other hand, the error is to be avoided of having one's design too meagre to be effective, and some little experience aided by sound judgment must be the chief monitor in the selection of patterns to be applied in various positions. The bold outlines essential to the frieze and cornice would look outrageously out of place on the panels of a door, or anywhere in similarly close proximity to the eyes of the spectator.

Errors of drawing, such as broken curves and improperly balanced attempts at rectangular figures, are of vital importance, and to be scrupulously avoided by any painstaking workman. Remember that however beautiful may be the polychromatic effects, if those effects are produced by the perpetuation of mistaken curves, unsymmetrical parallelograms, and improperly centred repetitions of the pattern, the inferiority of the drawing will stand out conspicuously as a lasting and discreditable monument to the carelessness of the workman.

It is not necessary to repeat here rules with which every student who has attended a School of Art should be thoroughly familiar, but to emphasise, if possible, the dictum that decorations which are "out of drawing," no matter how tastefully the colours in which they have been executed may have been chosen, can never be considered appropriate to even the most humble apartment, if that apartment has been thought worthy of decoration at all.

Avoid a disjointed and meaningless composition for the same reason, and let every part of the ornamental scheme possess some appearance of *possibility*. Nothing is more frequently met with in the present day than absolute copies of natural flowers and foliage, painted in "self" colours; they meet the eye everywhere—on the panels of our doors, in the entablatures of mantelpieces, in our mirror frames, and upon the surfaces of our furniture, and in all imaginable constructive embellishments of the draper and the upholsterer. Yet in a great number of such instances the probability of these natural adornments being capable of application in the forms presented is of the slightest character, and consequently they must be classed too frequently as errors of taste on the ground of misapplication.

To quote a case in point. The author was recently shown an apartment the doors of which were divided into six panels, and on each of these a natural flower had been exquisitely painted on a *black* ground. But, despite the actual

beauty of the work, the scheme of decoration stood self-condemned, for the stems of the flowers sprang directly from a heavily enriched moulding around each panel, and in no instance had a group been supported by painted design. It was simply an excellent *study from nature* of some beautiful flowers, *but it was not decoration*. Pendent from the wall as a picture its detractors would have been silenced, but on the door panels the whole of the work was meaningless, unsuitable, and misplaced.

Having shown by this example the error of inappropriateness, it remains to suggest how the style could have been improved and rendered probable. The *natural* stems and leaves could not have been found in such a position on the panels as that in which they were represented, but they could have been placed in a jar or vase, and by simply representing in suitable colours a vessel of the kind, that difficulty could have been readily surmounted. But even then the effect would not be so complete as to mark the difference between mere pictorial art and its adaptability to decoration. This result would, however, be attained by introducing a line of colour on the panel, and allowing the jar or vase to stand apparently on that line, while some of the tendrils of the plants, or here and there a turned or broken leaf, might be intertwined with the perpendicular line on either side. Here you create a *panel decoration*, while the mere representation of natural flowers falls very far short of a purely decorative effect. The one has a definite *meaning*—you intended to decorate your panels, and you do so; the other simply entitles you to be considered a copyist from nature, good or bad according to the degree of skill you have thrown into your work.

Passing, for the moment, to combinations of geometric or curvilinear ornament, the same consideration must be brought to bear upon their suitability. A really good design should be one from which it would be found impossible to take a portion without injury to its effect, and to which any additional detail would be equally detrimental.

The adaptability of geometric or other conventional design also requires careful judgment in its relation to the respective parts. A pattern which is designed to continue horizontally, as for a frieze, or the platband of an architrave, would be especially unsuited for use perpendicularly, as on the front of a pilaster or the panels of doors, shutters, &c.

Of naturalistic treatment in decoration, it may be generally remarked that whatever is excellent in art is simply so from its perfect harmony with natural results as seen in common experience. The conception and expression in grand works in painting and sculpture, in the finest examples held up to the admiration of art workers, may be said to derive their greatest value "from such an embodiment of scene, action, and object as shall have the harmonising probability of a natural aspect rationally sustained throughout." Such were the principles advocated in an interesting discussion which took place before the Decorative Art Society several years ago, and they are such as should be earnestly borne in mind by modern exponents of the natural school. It is the very probability which arrests our sympathy, and by an inductive

process of reasoning creates those associative suggestions which most impress the mind and institute that comparison by which the refinements of art can alone be properly estimated.

Much of the decorative work in a modern drawing-room may be said to be directly opposed to the tenets referred to. Here, for instance, is a design of a bird calmly resting, with a fish in his beak, upon the



Fig. 38.—Panel (Repoussé).

back of a brass *repoussé* scone, in the possession of the author. Considered as a specimen of brazier's work, it is

highly commendable; but there is the rising sun in the background, apparently giving forth rays of light, the probability of which effect is certainly not enhanced by the flames of four wax candles which, when necessary, are burning in the brackets attached to it, and yet, when hung upon the wall as a panel decoration, it is really a tasteful accessory to an apartment.

It may be said of the compositions of the Adams style, and the earlier decorative work yet preserved to us by Raffaello and Benvenuto Cellini, that they abound in improbabilities; but we shall do well to remember that at least they possessed a base, something from which the exuberant scroll work had its origin, or from which the natural foliage sprang in a rational and artistic manner. It was not enough for these early decorators that they depicted pleasingly an animal, a bird, or a beautiful flower; each of these details had a support, and a reason for its introduction; they were not content to paint a realistic apple-blossom, or represent in natural colours a bird or a butterfly, but they were careful to make them in every sense a decorative *accessory*. In design particularly, form and proportion are of the greatest importance. However rich and fanciful the ornamentation, it cannot redeem a want of proportionate repose or grace of form; and when we consider that our own comparatively humble branch of art is indispensable to the general embellishments of modern houses, and that the bare whitewashed surfaces of the Puritan period have been continuously banished during succeeding generations until in all ranks of life there is found an expressed desire for beautiful homes, we readily understand how essential it is to modern decorators that they should approach their work with an educated intelligence and a refinement of artistic principles.

"A creditable designer," says Mr. Crabb, "requires to have naturally a fine perception of the beautiful, a feeling for the charming versatility of form and colouring, a lively imagination, facility in associating ideas and applying the

materials collected by study to produce invention, and an extensive acquaintance with the sources of ornament, and the principles in which the Arts of Design originated among the nations of antiquity."

Apartments in which the rich architectural arrangements are made richer by polychromatic embellishment, by skilful dispositions of gilding, by judicious harmonies of decorative effect, can only be satisfactory in proportion to their fidelity to the recognised and unerring canons of design.

Such are the axioms which alone can guide the decorative workman along the pathway to success in the practice of his craft, and their due observance is in as great a degree a duty imposed on him as that of any other of the technical processes by which he is enabled to compound his paints or arrange the broader details of ordinary house painting.

Two all-important subjects have thus been shown to march hand in hand—the one, that knowledge of the harmonies of colours to which our earlier chapters are devoted; the other, a just appreciation of the relative values of the component details which go to make up an appropriate theme of decoration.

CHAPTER XII.

THE STUDY OF EMBLEMATIC DESIGN.



Y the remarks in the preceding chapter it will be understood that it is a recognised obligation on the part of the decorator to suit his ornament to the purpose it is intended to serve, but a generally accepted canon of that kind would be insufficient unless it were approached from another point of view than mere beauty of form or tasteful array of decorative colouring. It is now necessary to look at the *meaning* or "spirit" of decoration in relation to its suitability to a presupposed system of design.

An emblem may be, for the better enunciation of this theory, first of all described as something which by its general outline conveys to the mind a pictorial presentment of a given object, and as signs or emblems were originally used in much the same manner as are our alphabets of the present day, viz. to convey to the spectator a sentence or an expression, so they may in the decoration of modern apartments be made to correspond, in a greater or less degree of artistic treatment, to the uses for which a room or rooms are usually arranged.

In the very earliest ages, some, like that of ancient Egypt, too remote for the most learned archæologists of the present to

determine the precise period at which their decorations were perfected, we find that the conventional representation of actual things was characteristic of every scheme of embellishment, and that each of these representations was the means of imparting a definite impression to the observer. In the elaborate decorations of their tombs the most stirring scenes in the lives of those they thus delighted to honour were made the subjects chosen for their artistic talent. It was the opinion of the late Owen Jones that Egyptian art was among the most perfect of those styles which formed the model for decorative painters in succeeding ages, and as their decorators were essentially chromatic in their ideas, painting everything that could by any possibility be made to carry colour, it is undoubtedly to the Egyptians that we owe much of the polychromatic experience upon which the theoretical ideas of the nineteenth century have been built up.

Mr. Digby Wyatt has well said that "in all appeals the decorative artist can make to the brain through the medium of the eye, he has open to him two distinct channels of communication. . . . one by employing conventional forms, the other by introducing representations of natural objects." In the former, he, of course, most usually avoids the complication of his work by the introduction of light and shade and similar "accidental effects," while in the second case his duty would clearly be to reproduce as nearly as he possibly can the actual appearance of the object he seeks to depict.

It is chiefly in the second of these courses that the adaptability of emblematic decoration will be found, as the subject matter of panels and medallions, cameos and friezes, may all be, as suggested in chapter vii., made to refer pictorially to the uses of the apartment so treated.

Let us take as a preliminary illustration the treatment of a dining-room which has been wholly decorated by the painters' art and from which the paperhanger has been rigorously banished.

If we have a dado with projecting ledges and architectural

mouldings, its severe expanse of plain surface may be aptly broken into panels above the skirting and proportioned to the size of the apartment or the extent of continuous dado. If on these panels we desire to paint an artistic view or a figure subject, or a group of objects, how easily we may select an appropriate illustration by a little attention to the principles of "emblematic" ornament!

If we are painting a landscape view, we may select a vineyard with the overhanging clusters of ripe grapes, or a farming scene in which those animals which minister to the appetite form the central idea. On the one hand the Bacchanalian, on the other the gastronomical pleasures of the table are, so to speak, symbolised in the pictorial treatment of these subjects.



Fig. 39.—Medallion from a Frieze.

Still life: the grouping of dead game, as in the medallion subject at Fig. 39, which would form part of a decorative

frieze; the wine flagon and richly-coloured and luscious grapes, pendent, or lying on a table in clusters, can hardly fail to commend themselves as thoroughly suited to the embellishment of the dining-room; while our figures may be drawn from the ancient mythology, Ceres the goddess of plenty, Pomona the presiding deity of fruits and orchards, Bacchus the wine-god, and so on to the end of the list.

On the frieze below the cornice we may paint a processional subject in which "all the good things of the earth" are portrayed, or we may "conventionalise" the plumage of rare and beautiful birds, the outlines of fishes and beasts, and so arrange a striking but thoroughly emblematic ornamental composition.

The introduction of appropriate inscriptions around a dining-room, below the frieze, is also a feature sometimes worthy of adoption. In such a case the lettering should be of a classic or Gothic character, and so interwoven with the arrangement of the ornamental details as to obviate the possibility of making it too much in the style of a shop facia or the ordinary every-day work of the sign-writer. Appropriateness here would consist in the choice of a quotation, and suiting its sense and meaning as well as its length or brevity to the other requirements of the apartment. Here is an excellent couplet from Gay—"Every creature was decreed to aid each other's mutual need;" another, from Shakespeare—"He that keeps not crust or crumb, weary of all, he shall want some;" and this from Armstrong—"Oppress not nature. . . . with feasts too late, too solid, or too full." (Wyatt: "Illumination as it should be.")

Such inscriptions as those mentioned might be admirably worked up as an aid to the pictorial decorations by putting the letters in gold with a fine outline, or by illuminating after the style of mediæval manuscripts the initial letters of the principal words, and supporting the entire sentence on a running ornamental scroll. Such a sentence introduced into a narrow cove of a decorated cornice can hardly fail to please

the appreciative admirer of judicious embellishment. The valuable initial letters which appear at the heading of each chapter in this book have been especially introduced in view of their decorative utility for the purposes referred to, those occurring at chapters i., ii., v., vii., ix., xi., xii., xiv., and xvii. being particularly appropriate. The serpents and winged dragons, together with the wealth of graceful scroll foliage in those examples, admit of a wide diversity of polychromatic treatment. They would look well if worked upon a solid gold mat as a ground for the colours of the details.

If we select for portrayal on our panels the pagan deities we must remember their special characteristics, so that we may not err from the ideas inculcated by mythological lore as to their particular attributes.

Ceres (Fig. 40) in the archæology of the arts is the goddess of husbandry. In painting and sculpture she is represented as a young woman of pleasing countenance, and is surrounded by the usual attributes of pastoral existence, such as corn-sheaves, reaping-hooks, scythes, and rakes. In some of the studies from the antique she is shown



Fig. 40.—Draped Figure. Ceres.

as a tall, majestic woman with golden hair surrounded by ears of corn, and holding in her hands poppies and wheat, in allusion to the belief of the ancients that she was the first tiller of the earth. The engraving is from an authoritative work on decoration.

Bacchus is generally represented as a ruddy-complexioned and sturdy-limbed man, having his head crowned with the leaves of the vine, the figure being undraped.

Pomona, who was supposed by the Romans to preside over the fruits of the earth, was represented as a nymph seated on a basket containing flowers and fruit, and holding a bough in one hand and apples in the other.

Copia, the goddess of plenty, is another of the heathen deities whose appearance upon the panels of a dining-room

would be specially appropriate. She is represented as bearing in one hand a horn from which drop fruits, pearls, flowers, and pieces of gold and silver. Her head is usually crowned with flowers. The "horn of plenty," of which Fig. 41 is an illustration, is often met with in ornamental com-

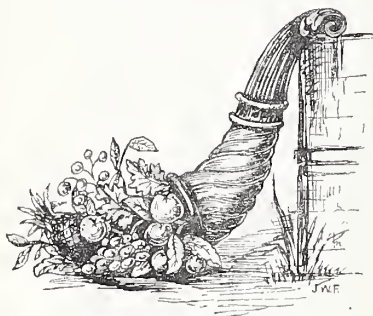


Fig. 41.—Cornucopia or "Horn of Plenty."

positions, and is well known by its name of "cornucopia."

In ecclesiastic decoration symbolism by means of emblems is carried out to a greater extent than is the case with other branches of the decorator's art, and in most instances these emblems are in themselves explanatory of Biblical texts. Therein lies the true meaning of emblematic decoration. Thus upon an apse, or on the ceilings forming the under portions of side galleries, we often see depicted a lily. The

connection is at once apparent to us—"Consider the lilies, how they grow," &c.; in another place we have a lamb—"Feed my lambs;" in another a dove—"And he sent forth a dove," &c.; while at another part is the cross, the passion-flower, and the grapes—their connection with "the cross



Fig. 42.—Ecclesiastic Ornament. Panel Treatment of Passion-flower, Lily, &c.

and passion" and the "true vine" immediately takes the mind to the texts of Holy Writ in which all and every of these objects are severally referred to, and thus they become really emblematical decorations in every sense of the term.

There is then no reason why the appropriateness of pictorial representation seen in many of our decorated churches

should not be brought usefully to bear upon the decorations of our dwelling houses, and thus do away with much of the incongruity of detail which mars many a well-meant effort in the way of producing "something suitable," while the designer has not the faintest notion of what that suitability should consist of.

In Fig. 42 we see combined the representative subjects—the dove, the lily, and the passion-flower—as appropriate combinations for ecclesiastical adornment.

The length at which we have dealt with these theoretical generalities is necessary to bring students of chromatic painting step by step to practical work, and enables us to consider the working application of them to the craft. The in-

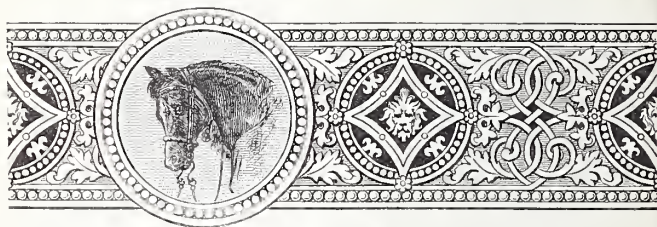


Fig. 43.—Portion of Decorative Medallion Frieze Border.

troduction of landscape and figure subjects into decoration without proper ornament to support them would be disappointing, inasmuch as the subjects themselves would appear quite as much out of place as the painted flowers mentioned on the preceding page. But given a generally well-balanced ornament as a framework for the landscape panels, there is scarcely anything but may be effectively introduced into them—even our best painters may be laid under contribution, and thus examples of high artistic excellence be placed before the eyes of the decorator's patron. Fig. 43 is a horse's head, taken from a picture of Sir Edwin Landseer. Such a subject painted upon a frieze without other embellishment would be inappropriate to its purpose, but here we have an elegant

interlaced pattern supporting medallions, and at intervals a larger medallion, upon which is the equine subject. On pages 120 and 121 are four graceful examples of this style of decorative treatment, each of the subjects being taken from the works of the greatest animal painter of the century. Upon a deeply-coved ceiling, or as a mural embellishment for large apartments, work of this kind would prove exceedingly attractive, the subjects chosen being suited to the special requirements of particular cases, and judiciously varied, in order to avoid repeating any one subject in the same apartment.

Of these subjects, Fig. 45 may be referred to as giving an apt illustration of the combination of an Elizabethan frame with the purely landscape deer-stalking scene of its centre arrangement. The Elizabethan character is preserved in the pointed terminals, between each of which is the perforated scroll form, of which an enlarged illustration appears on page 94. It will be seen that a portion of the detail is made, in the example on the next page, to pass through the aperture in the curl of the scroll.

In Figs. 46 and 47 the central subjects are treated more in the style of cameos; the hawking party, from its obvious allusion to the ancient British sport of falconry, would fit in with the remarks made upon sporting subjects generally in our seventh chapter. It is here supported by a free flowing interlacement of curved scroll ornament somewhat analogous to open carved fretwork. A decoration of this kind, rendered in gold for the scroll work, upon a deep marone ground, and with the centre panel in natural colours, would have an exceedingly rich and "taking" appearance; of course with the proviso that the other details of the decoration are in harmony with the composition.

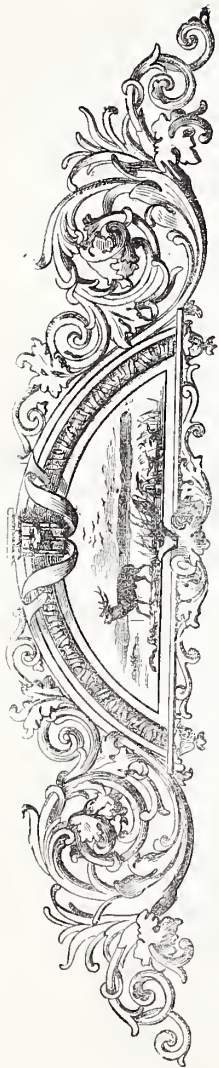


Fig. 44.



Fig. 45.

Landscape and Ornament. "Landseer" Subjects applied to Decoration.



Fig. 46.

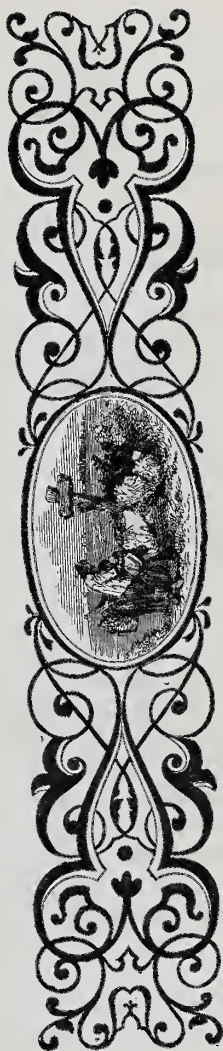


Fig. 47.

Portions of Decorative Friezes. Landscape Cameos after Landseer.

CHAPTER XIII.

ON THE ADVANCED USES OF STENCILLING.



DECORATIVE work, as generally met with in an ordinary house at the present day, is often said by its detractors, and by so-called advocates for "high art" culture, to have become much more mechanical and less artistic in its character than was the case a generation or two ago, and this much

must at all events be admitted.

We have not to seek far afield for an explanation of an undeniable fact. At the beginning of the century—in that "Georgian" era which has been on all hands condemned as the very zenith of the age of ugliness in the homes of the people—only the houses of the wealthy were decorated at all. The few patrons of the decorator were limited principally to those who could pay such prices for their domestic embellishments as would ensure the work being that of an art workman not necessarily compelled to fall back upon mechanical aid, or to find in meaningless repetition of one set form of adornment the only method of making his job "pay" and yielding a profit to the tradesman undertaking it. Hence the few examples of decoration then to be found were all possessed of more or less originality, and were each, as it were, individualised by the taste or

skill of those employed upon them. But critics are too apt to lose sight of the fact that at that period the middle-class dwelling house was a veritable expanse of unmitigated ugliness. The marvellous productions of the paperstainer, which have brought art and beauty into the humblest living rooms of to-day, were then subjected to a vexatious impost in the form of stamp duty, which militated against their extended usefulness, and thus the ordinary dwelling was little more than a series of bare painted apartments, unrelieved by any attempt whatever at artistic embellishment.

As, however, the craving for something beyond mere painted wall surfaces made itself felt, it became necessary to meet the demand for ornament by the execution of work which should please the eye, and be in itself an effective relief to the dull monotony of the home, without incurring the great cost of such paintings as appeared in the palaces of the plutocracy, and stencilling as an aid to decoration was reverted to by the house painter who wanted to cheaply embellish the dwelling houses of his patrons.

But with the use of the stencil plate at that period, it became apparent that our house painters, notwithstanding the fact that their knowledge of the manufacture and properties of colours was in some sense superior to that generally found among the "brush hands" of the present day, were lamentably wanting in artistic feeling. Technical hand-books, such as might guide and educate men in their respective businesses, and of which such works as those published in Weale's series of practical text-books form noteworthy examples, were as yet in their infancy; and in such rare efforts as were made to create serial publications for the interchange of trade knowledge it was too often plainly evident that the idea was, generally speaking, weakly and spasmodically brought into practice, and in consequence they were hardly likely to go very far in those grand principles of technical education which have done so much for painters and decorative workers of all grades during

the last few years. At length, however, the result of improved taste and educated art feeling has brought about its logical result, and there should be no longer any fear that where it is essential to ornament a drawing-room, a boudoir, or a hall cheaply and efficiently the use of stencilling will be inartistically applied.

The decorator who has carefully studied the work of others, and has as carefully brought his knowledge into his daily business, should be able to take a stencilled design into any ordinary apartment, and to leave that apartment not only

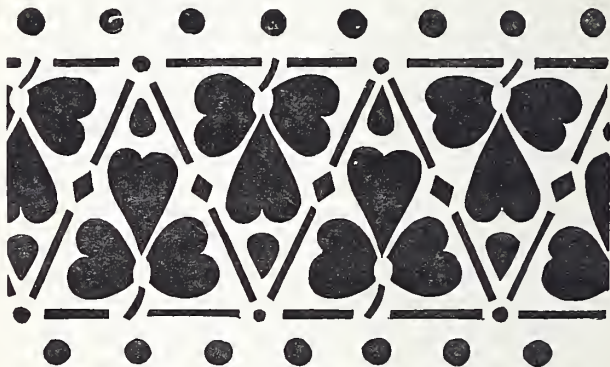


Fig. 48.—Stencil Border.

brighter and more beautiful under his hands, but perfectly artistic in its adaptation of design.

With a view to placing this fact more intelligibly before the decorative student, it will be of service to show how a purely decorative subject may be built up upon the basis of what are necessarily set designs.

Fig. 48 is a running pattern, by Mr. Rothwell, capable, of course, of being continued out to any length as a band for a dado, or even more suitably in a coved cornice where only one colour is required in which to render the pattern. This

particular design, from its extreme simplicity, will the better elucidate the progressive stages by which more ornate styles have been rendered in decorative stencil plates. In the position indicated, preferably that of the cove of an ordinary cornice where more delicacy of design would by reason of the natural shadow thrown upon a curved or indented surface be, to some extent, hidden, if not entirely lost, when seen from the floor of an apartment, the boldness of this pattern should especially commend it. The ties, inseparable to a stencilled border, are here utilised to add to rather than deteriorate from the general effect; as an evidence of which may be instanced the circle which forms the "tie" or break to the broad detail on the leaf portion of the pattern, and which here serves not only the purpose of strengthening the stencil plate, but obviates the heaviness which would otherwise render unsightly so large a proportionate mass of colour as would be necessary to define this particular portion of the ornament. Similarly, the circular dots on the lines serve to continue the pattern without the necessity to fill up the ties with the pencil when the design is transferred to the ground surface; while for the outer circles the spaces between each might be considerably reduced in actual practice. By transferring the lines between the main ornament to a second stencil plate, on which, of course, that part only would be cut out, the workman has the means at hand of putting in two colours to the design, and thereby further increasing the value of this simple pattern in the practical work of decoration.

In our sixth chapter are given some sketches illustrative of the arrangement of wall surfaces according to the various recognised styles, and in one of them (Fig. 8) is shown the frieze or band below the cornice as it might be rendered by the decorator. Let us now suppose we are engaged upon the walls of some such apartment.

We have here a design for a wall frieze (Fig. 49) in accord with our modern notions of surface decoration—a



Fig. 49.—Stencilled Frieze Border.

free rendition of natural leaves and birds. To bring it yet more into unity of ideas, the designer, Mr. E. Hoyle, of Bradford, to whom the author is indebted for several excellent suggestions, has selected the house swallow for his ornithological subject. This design, simple as it undoubtedly is, will sufficiently illustrate the manner in which the stencil plate may serve as the pioneer of hand-painted decoration. To break up the whole into well-balanced compartments, each of the foliated divisions is judiciously alternated with a panel of purely conventional ornament.

Of course the major portion of

this design is simply the too often despised and underrated stencilling, but where a really artistic scheme of decoration is required, no practical man need stop short at the use of the stencil plate. Rather let him take it simply as the beginning of his work, and in a great degree such a design will prove a fitting preliminary to a far higher artistic effort.

Having determined, then, that the buds and foliage shall have a "naturalesque" finish rather than only the flat rendering procurable by the stencil brush, we have simply to adopt the stencil plate in place of the ordinary "pouncing" of the pattern upon the frieze, and save thereby an incalculable amount of preliminary labour.

Let us suppose that we have decided upon a dark blue ground for this division of the frieze pattern. If we purpose reproducing this design by actual hand-pencilling alone it must first be drawn upon paper, and then with a needle point (the paper being placed upon a piece of cloth so that the needle may not be broken or its point too quickly blunted during the operation), we have to carefully trace out in numberless minute holes the complete outline of the design. Then follows the "pouncing" of the pattern on the dark blue ground, either with finely powdered chalk or some light-powdered colour, in either case confined in a light muslin bag through the texture of which the dust makes its escape, and thence through the needle perforations of the outlined ornament on to the surface of the work. Thus far the task is to the practised craftsman simplicity itself.

But now let us consider a moment. Is it our desire that the leaves and tendrils, the stems and the free flying birds, shall be light and aerial? Do we seek to give purity of tone to the feathery plumage of these denizens of the air, or trace in delicate greenery the beauty of natural foliage? The answer will be that of course we do! But how is that best to be attained on a ground of a deep blue tone? Suppose we want to give an Oriental plumage to the bird; that, instead of being necessarily swallows or counterfeit present-

ments of dull-coated London sparrows, we have a desire to give them the bright orange and red breasts, or the yellow plumage with vivid pink and green markings, peculiar to the feathered inhabitants of a tropical forest. We must first paint in our subject with a light grey tint, or a "broken" white to kill the depth of the ground beneath, otherwise we shall have the blue asserting itself through our transparent-glazing tones, and effectually spoiling both foliage and birds alike.

To save all this expenditure of time and labour, let us take up the stencil plate, and then on our deep blue ground, with a colour composed only of white lead mixed with turpentine, and sufficient varnish to "bind" it—that is, to prevent it rubbing up when we apply a wash of colour upon it later on—let us stencil the whole of the "bird and bough" subject on to the work.

The colour for this purpose should be well thinned, and the stencil brush should be used as dry as possible and well rubbed out upon a palette board, after freshly charging it, each time. The workman may then count upon getting both an evenly spread surface and a sharply-defined outline of every detail of the design.

It may be supererogatory to repeat a standing caution, but so great sometimes is the decorator's hurry to make "a good show," that the warning is hardly thrown away if we again remind the workman to carefully strain through fine muslin even the thin colour used for this portion of the work. Far too frequently are found workmen so careless of their employer's interests, or so slovenly in their business, that they are satisfied to put some white-lead into a pot with the requisite thinnings, and, having stirred it up for a minute or two, are quite ready to apply it to their work. It is utterly opposed to common sense to suppose that the time occupied in the preparation of the colours makes no show of progress, and no decorator "worth his salt" would regard as labour lost the necessary time taken up in getting his colours properly put into working order.

Having completed on each side of the apartment the grounding in of the frieze pattern, or rather that portion of it which is destined to be rendered in the "round," at least twelve hours or so should intervene before the artist takes the completion of the design in hand. By allowing the grey tint to become thoroughly hard, brilliancy of effect on some parts of the work may be obtained by transparent washes of varnish colours without danger of disturbing the body of the lighter colour. The leaves may be painted in with colours prepared with linseed oil and driers, using, in fact, no other drying medium, for it is not necessary that the pigments used should in this case quickly "set;" the process of softening one tint into another to give the curl of the leaves renders the use of varnish colours undesirable where a body of any pigment is required to produce the result desired.

In the engraving, the leaves, the main stem, and the remaining details are shown "in the flat" as they would appear when stencilled only, but when each division is rendered into "the round," the arteries of the leaves, the feathers of the birds, and the roundness of the stem from which the component features take their rise, would be shown in their proper foreshortening, with their lights and shadows in every way as correctly and effectively as though the stencilling brush had never been applied to them. It would further be requisite to bring the leaves in contact with the main stem, which in a merely stencilled design they could not be on account of the "ties." It is scarcely necessary in an engraving to crowd in a number of minor sprays or branches, nor is it at all requisite in stencilling the design upon the work to do so, but when using the pencil the decorator can readily break up with a stroke or two here and there any too pronounced uniformity of detail. By judiciously exercising this prerogative he should be able to give to the whole composition a freedom of execution amply sufficient for the purposes intended.

The bold square lines, by which each division of this frieze

is rendered distinct in itself, present a difficulty in dealing with them, but it must be borne in mind that they are capable of considerable modification in actual practice ; and to break the monotony, gilding might with advantage be applied to them, either as a fine edge upon the inner side, or a fine line of gold upon the broad line of colour (in the centre preferably), and such an arrangement would have a perfectly harmonious effect. Gold might also form the circular pieces in the panel, and would have a strikingly rich effect against a dark blue ground.

For the second or lighter-coloured star, shown immediately behind the smaller and darker detail, if gold be used for the principal figure a shadow tint might best be utilised, and the flowers may be rendered in a rose tint, the high lights in white shadowed away into a lake or rose madder tone, somewhat in the style of Chinese ornament, on which, in fact, the example before us may be assumed to have been based.

In the treatment of the conventionalised ornament on the smaller division of the frieze a ground of a warm salmon or terra-cotta tint with the star or rose in a darker hue, formed of the same tone colour as a basis, would prove attractive, and would give a pleasing relief to the "natural" treatment of the oblong and principal division.

The colour of the lower band upon which the dotted ornament appears would be ruled by that of the wall filling, which if the treatment suggested for the frieze be adopted should be a neutral or warm French grey. In this case the lower band might be a pale straw colour, the circles in gold and the line next the wall filling also in gold or a deep marone tint. Of course these suggestions would be modified by the experiences on which comments have been made in preceding chapters, such as the height of the room, the character of its furniture and hangings, and the degree of natural light admitted into the apartment, &c.

A tabular diagram of suggested colours for walls from the

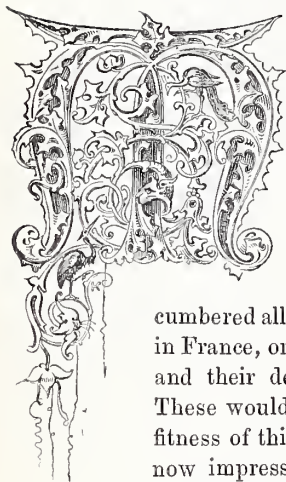
skirting to the cornice, including dado, if any, is given on page 21, Chapter III.

A frieze of the relative width shown in this example would be obviously unsuited to a low-ceilinged apartment, and would have in such a room to be considerably reduced; in fact a simple conventional decoration, whether stencilled or hand-painted, would be advisable in a room of not more than ten feet in height, while in apartments of exceptional loftiness it is advisable to guard on the other hand against the over-elaboration of such decoration as may be decided upon immediately contiguous to the cornice.

Having shown by these examples how useful an adjunct to modern surface decoration may be made the judicious use of stencilled designs, whether in combination with hand-finished ornament or rendered simply into tasteful combinations of colour, we will now turn to the further consideration of ceiling enrichment, in which also the use of the stencil plate may often be found available as an aid to the subsequent introduction of purely hand-pencilled compositions, especially in those instances where a saving of time and the minimum of expense in their preparation necessarily enter into the decorator's consideration.

CHAPTER XIV.

CEILING ORNAMENT.



UCH has been said by writers on decorative subjects of the necessity of keeping in as light a hue as possible the ceilings of our modern apartments, but there are yet many gradations between the bare whitewashed coverings of most modern living rooms, and the heavily en-

cumbered allegorical compositions of Le Pautre, in France, or Sir William Thornhill, in England, and their decorative prototypes in the past. These would as much annoy our sense of the fitness of things on an ordinary ceiling as they now impress us with their grandeur in the "painted hall" of Greenwich Hospital, or in

the erstwhile regal seclusion of Hampton Court Palace.

That these representations of flying figures and mythological deities are among the choicest works of artistic genius must be admitted, but of their appropriateness it is impossible to speak; indeed their only justification from the present utilitarian standpoint seems to be found in the fact that being overhead their splendour of detail is not liable to be injured by contact or hidden by the disposition of the furniture or hangings, as would, perhaps, be their fate in a less elevated situation.

And yet with this much granted, it must be borne in mind that such subjects are unsuited to a perfectly flat ceiling, such as is generally met with—that is to say, one merely divided from the wall surface by an ordinary cornice. To give due effect to a pictorial ceiling it should spring not from the termination of the wall plane, but from a boldly arched and deeply recessed cove.

We may here quote in illustration of the treatment of such a ceiling one carried into practical work at the residence of a gentleman in Park Lane, London, and which certainly has the merit of appropriateness, since the entire fittings and furniture of the apartment are not only of an Oriental character, but were in some instances brought direct from the East by their owner. Most readers are aware that in sunnier climates than our own, and among Eastern peoples, it is not uncommon to dispense with a complete roof covering, while in many buildings a large square opening above the centre of the apartment admits an uninterrupted view of the blue sky peculiar to those latitudes. Taking this for his leading idea, the artist in the example under notice has utilised the cove to paint a representation of an open stonework balustrading upon which creeping plants and graceful foliage are skilfully depicted, while the ceiling itself represents the deep blue of the sky with a fleecy cloud floating in the calm atmosphere, and just a couple of long-legged herons, or storks with expanded wings, in the act of flying swiftly across the opening. It need hardly be said that the result is exceedingly agreeable; the whole subject is light and aerial, and quite in keeping with the effect intended, that of a luxuriant Oriental boudoir.

In the decoration of a dining-room a much heavier tone of colour is permissible in ceiling decoration as with the other details of that apartment, and the example (Fig. 50) chosen for illustration in the present chapter is, perhaps, more suited to the decorative requirements of an ordinary dining-room than any other apartment. In its application,



Fig. 50.—Suggestion for
Ceiling Decoration.

the recesses caused on either side of the fireplace by the projection of the chimney breast are necessarily ignored, for in a band of the proportionate width shown in the engraving, the breaking up of the pattern into additional angles would present some difficulty, and interfere somewhat with the symmetrical construction of the design. If, however, the depth of these recesses should require a continuance of the border pattern round the angles, the square patera at either corner might with advantage be employed on either side the abutment, both at the point of projection and also in the recessed angle next the wall flank. The members of the cornice next the ceiling if gilded would have a particularly rich and massive appearance. This portion of the work would, however, be the final and completing task, and we may therefore leave that for the present. Although for cheapness and rapidity of execution distemper colours may be used in the rendition of this design, it is decidedly to be preferred that flattening colours should be chosen for the work, and the whole surface of the ceiling should first be carefully flattened in any desired tint of "broken" white. A small proportion of crimson lake is, perhaps, the best to break down the crudity of white alone, as it imparts the requisite warmth, combined with a delicate purity of tint which forms an appropriate setting for such deeper tones as may be afterwards introduced into the design. If the colour is to be worked in distemper the addition of a similar proportion of rose-pink to the white will prove nearly of equal service in toning down the crudity of the bulk.

Previously to "flattening" a plastered ceiling, it should be thoroughly prepared in order to arrest the suction. In many instances a ceiling if in a bad condition may profitably be papered over with a good lining paper, but in this case the greatest care must be taken to smooth down the joins, otherwise the decorations will be seriously marred by the seams left in the hanging. In this process of "bringing forward," as it is technically termed, the surface on which

the decorator has to exercise his skill, the best medium to employ is thoroughly strained boiled oil, to which a proportion of red lead is sometimes added. A couple of coats of double size will also answer the same purpose, but the oil is decidedly preferable. The next stage will then be to give the ceiling (and the cornice also if gilding is afterwards to be applied to its various details) several successive coats of good white lead paint or "Freeman's white" (page 42), which from its insusceptibility to change from the action of gaslight is particularly valuable for so large a surface as that of a ceiling. The white pigment, whether ordinary lead or the "patent" article be used for the purpose, may be mixed with rather more than the ordinary proportions of patent driers, linseed oil, and turpentine. After each coat care should be taken to rub down with fine glass-paper any irregularities of the surface, and if the ceiling has been papered, to reduce as much as possible any projections or overlapping joints. The surface is now ready for flattening, the colour for which will of course be prepared by the admixture of turpentine alone, although the better to "bind" the colour, a little oil or varnish is occasionally added. This is an essential where, as in the work before us, we have a number of different colours to manipulate upon the flattened surface, and acts as a preventive against any portion of the ground rubbing up under the stencil brush, and therefore injuring the more decided tints in which the pattern may be afterwards rendered. It is also much easier to rectify accidents or mistakes if the colour beneath is sufficiently "bound on" to enable us to wipe out with a soft cloth (previously moistened in oil or turpentine, or simply damped with soap and water) any spot of colour that it may be necessary to remove, or lead pencil, crayon, or charcoal marks, &c., with which we may find it useful to define or space out certain points in the design.

We may now pass to the consideration of the colours to be used, and of course these will as in previous examples be dependent upon the general scheme of decoration. A

heavy mass of colouring on the ceiling of a room in which the woodwork and walls are relatively lighter in hue would be an anomaly, and must be avoided. We have in previous chapters noted that colours should recede as they are placed farther from the floor, hence in speaking of those to be used in the details of our ceiling ornament we shall be understood as meaning only their relative tints rather than the actual pigments themselves.

One of the safest guides in work of this kind is to make a preliminary plan of one corner of the ceiling, say one-half the actual size, on a sheet of stout cartridge paper, and having coated it with patent knotting, flat it with the ground colour. Upon this the design should be carefully traced, and the details put in with the colours we contemplate using. We are thus enabled to remedy any defects of harmony or contrast, to soften and subdue some or bring out into greater relief others; and thus we have, as it were, a key to the whole composition, and an unfailing guide during our progress with the work.

The value of thus preparing a key plan to the decoration of the ceiling will be further enhanced if the room be one in which the light is reflected rather than directly admitted into the apartment, as is the case in many London houses, where absence of air space too often makes the dining-room the darkest apartment in the house, often indeed looking out on a high brick wall and making "sky" light quite out of the question. For such a room, the place in which the colours are prepared being probably a well-lighted workshop, great difficulty would be experienced in getting such tones of colouring as best suit the work, but by the use of the key plan the choice of the most appropriate hues will be greatly facilitated. By temporarily affixing it to the ceiling, by the aid of a few tin tacks or drawing pins, a ready means is obtainable of modifying the scheme of colour in any essential particular, and once decided by thus viewing it in the same light as that in which will appear the actual decoration, the

rest is tolerably "plain sailing." The colours may be altered or varied where necessary upon the key plan while it is in position, and when taken down the whole of the tints can be readily matched to it in the workshop with the certainty that they are ready for the use of the decorator.

Assuming the ground work of the ceiling to be a broken tint of pink, within a degree of absolute white, we may put in the broad band upon which are the diamond-shaped lozenges in a deeper tone of pink, obtained by the addition of a more crimson lake to the colour used for the ground. The broad band enclosing the centre in a lighter tint of the same tone will be effective. And we may here remark that although this circular band of pink may be, by several gradations of tint, lighter than that on the border, its appearance will, on the actual ceiling, be not perceptibly different from it, while had we used the same tint it would really have presented a deeper tone to the eye. On either side of this centre band a line may be carried round of a deeper crimson, and its outside edges may be rendered in gold, using either oil or Japan gold size as the vehicle for running them. The lines on either side of the rectangular band and the diapered lines which define the diamond lozenges should also be rendered in gilding, those at the edges forming at each corner a square as in the engraving. The patera on these diamond-shaped divisions may be either pale green or French grey, against the actual ground colour of the ceiling, and similarly the triangular ornament or "dog's tooth" pattern, as it is generally called by decorators, might be the ground colour against a pale umber tint with a dull crimson line outside the entire circle. The ornamental foliated scroll, of which only a portion is shown, as in practice it would be complete, not broken by the border at each corner, is capable of considerable amplification and may be elaborated in various styles. It may be treated as ornament in the round, each leaf with its proper arteries, and showing, by softening the lights and shadows, the curls

of the foliated scroll in its radiations from the principal curve. Thus treated it would have a capital effect in a room in which such a frieze as that given in the last chapter had been used on the decorations of the wall flank. The ornaments on the circular band surrounding the centre flower may be gilded, or a darker shade of grey may be used to define this part of the design. The patera at each corner admits of several colours appropriate to the remaining portions of the design being introduced into it. This method of treatment with the upper members of the cornice gilded entire should produce an exceedingly rich effect.

Although it is suggested that gilding may be effective on the ceiling of a dining-room, care must be taken that little if any is used in other parts of the room. The decorations of the walls, doors, shutters, &c., might best be given in colours only.

In setting out a ceiling of this simple description little more need be done than striking the main intersecting and diagonal lines by means of a string on which powdered charcoal has been well rubbed. Or yet further to economise time, a piece of stout paper or cardboard cut to the shape and size of the lozenges may be placed on the ceiling, and lightly pencilled round each at their proper distances. For the circle in the centre a similar plan may be adopted, only in this case an actual circle may be made in wood (such as framemakers' ordinary backboarding will answer the purpose) having its outer edge correctly bevelled. This may then serve the double purpose of the preliminary marking out, and afterwards as a ready means of applying the lining fitch in just the same manner as in using an ordinary "straight edge," although it is of course preferable to run the outlines with a lining pencil. Such portions of the design as admit of stencilling may also be cut out and finished up by hand as referred to in the preceding chapter; the other details will, of course, be correctly drawn, and then pounced on for such parts as are to be rendered wholly by hand-work.

It now remains for us to yet further touch upon the practical application of the design, having arranged as far as may be the general scheme of colours in which it may be tastefully rendered, and of course admitting the ideas suggested to be capable of such modifications as individual tastes may seem to dictate. These may readily be decided in getting up the key plan from which the work will be carried to completion, and the greater the care that has been bestowed upon its preparation, the more readily will the subsequent work upon the actual surface of the ceiling be proceeded with. It should further be noted that the matching of hues will be materially simplified if the key plan is prepared, as suggested, with colours thinned up with the same media as those intended to be used in the work ; it is often extremely difficult to obtain precisely the same tint in oil colours as the same pigments would give when ground in water, and it will thus be seen that working in oil colours to a water-colour sketch of the proposed design adds considerably to the strain upon the intelligence of the decorator.

CHAPTER XV.

CEILING DECORATION AND SURFACE GILDING.



RELIMINARY to the actual decoration and absolutely essential to a successful finish is the accurate setting out of the intended design, and it may be well at this point to deal more directly than we have hitherto done with the necessary methods to be employed for setting out the surface of the ceiling, since the difficulty inseparable from overhead work makes this preliminary labour one requiring the greatest exactitude.

The decorator, from his position when at work, is only enabled to see that portion upon which he is actually engaged, unless he descends from the scaffolding at frequent intervals; and none know better than those employed on delicate details of artistic work how greatly such interruptions of the mind as are thereby created militate against success in decoration. But when every line is correctly placed, every detail of the design at its proper angle, or radiating at its proper curve, in the setting out, the skilled worker has the advantage of confidence in every stroke, and his employer réaps a twofold benefit in the quality of the work and its greater expedition in completion. The saving of time alone effected by properly attending to the

preliminaries is so great that hardly another word need be said upon this point to practical men. It is, generally speaking, only the novice or the sloven who is careless about the "marking out" of his work, or who thinks every hour wasted that is occupied in setting out his design; and yet these are the very men who are the longest time about it in the long run, since no inconsiderable portion of their time is subsequently expended in rectifying errors which never need have occurred had they used ordinary care in the first instance.

To find the centre of a given ceiling is often enough a work of difficulty even to practical men, where there is no centre flower. The author recently had occasion to enter a room in which a gasfitter was endeavouring to find the place at which to bring out his pipe for fixing a chandelier, and could but be amused by his clumsy expedient, although the decoration afterwards had to be manipulated so as to hide the damage he succeeded in doing. He had a long lath, which he held flat upon the surface over his head, one end being against what he "guessed might be about the middle of the chimney breast," and from the other end he let fall a plumb line to the floor, upon which he had chalked a spot for the centre. After witnessing him make three successive holes with an auger, neither of which was in the centre, the decorator interfered and found it for him, meeting only with his resentment, since he asserted he would have found it himself shortly! And yet this man had been twelve years or more a London gasfitter, while it was necessary in consequence of his ignorance to introduce some additional detail into the ornament, so that some of the leaves might fall on the patches of stopping, and thereby hide these abortive attempts at getting the centre of the ceiling.

The proper plan is simplicity itself.* Let two workmen take each one end of a line of fine whipcord, previously well rubbed with powdered charcoal, and hold it diagonally across the ceiling from the angles, repeating the process from the

* *Vide* "Elementary Decoration," p. 42.

reverse corners of the room. The lines, when struck, at once give at the point of intersection the *exact* centre. When there are deep recesses on each side of the chimney breast, the point should be taken from an angle formed by an imaginary line drawn parallel to the cornice at a distance equal to the projection of the chimney breast, otherwise the point of intersection would be too close to the abutment, but sometimes the angles may be taken at only half the distance of the projection with advantage, as the symmetry of the work may be better, although the "centre" would be rather imaginary than real. These remarks apply equally to either a square or oblong apartment.

When a ceiling is conspicuously "out of square," and the angles are in consequence of different degrees, it may be necessary to make a special modification of the corner pattern for each angle, the border, of course, running parallel with the cornice; but if the irregularity be very slight, it is preferable to "ease" the pattern gradually, so as to preserve the rectangular features of the design. To do this take a side of the room which presents a straight line, and at any distance from the cornice, but parallel to it, strike a charcoal line, say twelve inches from it, measure off the centre of this line, and from it describe a half circle of any radius intersecting the line on either side. From each of these points where the circle intersects it describe an arc outside the diameter of the circle, and intersecting each other. From the point where these arcs intersect to the original centre point draw a line towards the cornice, which will be at an exact right angle to that side of the apartment, and, taking this line as the guide, strike on each of the sides another line twelve inches from the cornice, and parallel to it. If the divergence of the cornice from the rectilinear parallelogram as now struck on the ceiling in charcoal be but slight, the whole of the decorative work may be executed on the lines constructed by the decorator; if, on the other hand, the difference be greatly marked, there is no alternative but to work to the cornice, and, as a conse-

quence, the readjustment of the corner patterns, as mentioned above, will be in most cases absolutely necessary.

Where one of the corners of an apartment, as in corner houses is sometimes the case, is curved or rounded, and it is essential to ascertain the centre of the ceiling, the most exact method of getting at the angle from which to strike the diagonal lines is by first striking a line across the curve from its two extremities. Next bisect this line, and carry the charcoal line right across it at the point of bisection, *i.e.* from the angle of the cornice opposite, to the cornice on the curved side; this will give precisely the same centre point as though the room had been perfectly square at each corner. In the rendition of the border pattern, given in Fig. 50, the design would be, of course, continued round the curved cornice. This could be effected by reducing slightly the dimensions of the diamond-shaped lozenges, or, as it is customarily termed, by "easing" the pattern in greater or less degree, as may be required.

We have now reached that point at which the gilding of various parts of the design require our attention, and it is expedient to devote it to some remarks upon that delicate process which by the very costliness of the material employed is one involving considerable nicety and care. An inferior or unpractised workman often wastes enough of the precious metal to do a decent job twice over, while others, moved by the temptation of easily making a shilling or two by the disposal of "skewings," are far less careful than they might be. The employer should watch carefully how far one man can make a book of gold go, and see to it that no unnecessary waste is allowed to occur. For this reason the gilder's tools should be in good order, his cutting-knife should be scrupulously clean, and so also should be his cushion, and if it has been very much cut about, let it be properly re-covered with soft chamois leather.

Another frequent cause of wastefulness in gilding is that disposition to hurry, which causes some employers to have

two or three different sets of workmen engaged in their various branches of work in the same apartment, and at the same time, as that in which gilding is being proceeded with. The consequent opening and closing of doors, the noise, and the dust, inseparable from this style of carrying on work, as well as the draughts thereby created, handicap heavily even the most painstaking workmen, and often prove fatal to a successful job. The decorator who knows his business will always let the gilders have "a clear shop," and even encourage them to work with locked doors rather than run the chances of being continually interrupted by the incursions of other workmen, whose curiosity often prompts them to neglect their own work for the purpose of watching the gilders.

Another essential should not be overlooked, and that is the provision of a proper platform from which the whole of the ceiling may be worked upon in comfort. Tressels placed at proper distances, with scaffold boards going round and across the entire room at the height required, with here and there a pair of steps by which to ascend, should be a *sine quâ non* in every well-ordered undertaking. The saving of time, which would otherwise be expended in "shifting" from one point to another, will of itself be considerable, without taking into account the increased comfort to the workmen. There should also be a substantial bench in the middle of the room for colours and thinnings, and such mixing of tints as may be required.

Gilding is capable of being performed in several distinct methods, of which the most usual are those known as "oil" and "Japan" gilding, and for frames, &c., to mirrors and console tables the "water" process. Ceiling work is generally one of the two former. Oil gilding has the merit of durability and richness or brilliancy; Japan gilding is the more expeditious of the two methods, and as the work is not liable to "bloom," there is no necessity to "size" the work after completion, as is the case with work which has

been gilded in oil. For this reason gilding in Japan gold size may be preferred on those parts which do not present a solid or rounded surface, and will be the best vehicle for running the lines in a design.

The Japan gold size as usually sold is generally far too rapid a dryer, however, if used alone, and to ensure the requisite "tack" or adhesiveness, most gilders add a proportion of varnish, together with a few drops of raw linseed oil. It is also an advantage to stain the vehicle slightly, either by adding some finely ground chrome if the lines are to be run upon, or in juxtaposition to, a dark surface colour; or if in contrast with light tints a proportion of ground burnt sienna should be added. Care must be taken that the quantity of pigment thus used is only sufficient to give the requisite staining property, without destroying the "tackiness" of the gold size.

With the medium so prepared lines may be run with the straight edge and lining fitch as in ordinary colour, stencilling may be done, and such parts as require to be pencilled in by hand may be readily completed. If the size has been properly manipulated it should be ready for gilding in from one to two hours, and should hold the "tack" for at least an hour after being "ready for gilding."

Oil size, from its greater liability to spread, *i.e.* form a rugged edge on the work, is not suitable for lining or stencilling.

Where the paint underneath is not properly hardened, it is necessary to prepare the surface for gilding by brushing it over with white of egg, and then dusting powdered whitening upon it to arrest the adhesiveness of the paint, but this should not be necessary if the colours have been worked in "flatting," provided the flatting itself has been properly made up.

Oil gold size is generally a most expensive commodity to purchase, but many gilders prefer to make their own, as being far more reliable than any sold ready prepared. It is simply

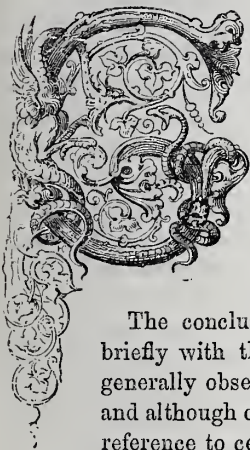
a preparation of "fat" oil, or linseed oil which has become thickened by age and exposure to the sun. For this purpose the oil which collects on the top of old paint should, when it has been standing a few weeks, be carefully poured off into another vessel. This, with raw linseed oil mixed with it, may be placed in a large wide-mouthed pot, covered with a sheet of glass to protect it from dust, and it may then be placed in some convenient position where it will during the day get the direct rays of the sun for two or three months, during which time it must be occasionally stirred. If water be placed at the bottom of the pot, such impurities as may be in the oil will sink through the water to the bottom, and greatly facilitate this stage of the preparation. In the course of a few weeks of this treatment the oil will become of the consistency of syrup, and may be then poured off into a bottle. This should be heated gently until the oil again becomes fluid, when it may be finally strained through coarse muslin to remove the sediment, put into gallipots, and covered away for use. When wanted for work, a proportion of yellow ochre and chrome, ground up finely, should be added, and if found to be too slow in drying, a little of the better class of carriage varnish may be added also. About twelve to sixteen hours is the usual time required to enable it to "set" properly when laid upon the surface to be gilded, and if properly made it will "hold the tack" for six or eight hours after it has become set, or even longer.

Turpentine should never be added to either oil or Japan gold size, as its evaporation will greatly impair the brilliancy of the gold, some work even turning black in consequence of its use as thinnings. The best plan is to thin out with oil or varnish. Oil size, however, from its very nature, invariably works "ropy" (which is a technical idiom to indicate a surface streaked with lines of uneven thickness or body), and hence on broad surfaces it must be carefully "laid off" to ensure an even spreading of the vehicle.

On completion of the gilding the work requires to be sized over with parchement size to arrest the bloom. This is made by melting parchement cuttings and diluting with warm water, and is applied with a camel-hair brush lightly over the surface of the gilding. The greatest care must be taken to keep the apartment free from dust, both while the gold size is in its wet and "taeky" stages, and also while the parchement size is being applied or drying. Some gilders use "pates" or paper-stainer's size instead of parchement. It is considerably cheaper, but not nearly so transparent, and is unfitted for employment by first-class tradesmen or in good work. One coat of the parchement size will generally be sufficient for such comparatively small surfaces as mouldings, &c., but on a wider expanse of gilding it may, in some instances, be as well to go over the sizing a second time to ensure the whole of the gold being properly covered, otherwise the work might in a few days present a spotted appearance from the blooming of those parts which may have been insufficiently sized.

CHAPTER XVI.

ON GILDING AND THE DECORATION OF DOORS, ARCHITRAVES, AND DADO IN POLYCHROME.



OLD LEAF forms an important accessory to colour decoration ; but it is yet possible to overdo its use, and, therefore, its application should be considered with quite as much thought and appreciative judgment in reference to its effect when finished, as in the case of the colour decoration itself.

The conclusion of the preceding chapter dealt briefly with the *technique* of gilding processes as generally observed in the decoration of interiors, and although chiefly therein discussed in immediate reference to ceiling enrichment, the general terms thus touched upon apply with equal force to that part of the gilders' art which comes more directly under the eye ; as, for instance, in the application of gold leaf to the mouldings of door panels, and the members of the various architraves, &c., composing the leading features of the door frames and window openings.

It is, of course, a difficult matter to lay down a hard-and-fast standard of good (or bad) taste in reference to the use of gold leaf, but the writer has, within the scope of his own experience, seen otherwise good work marred by a super-

abundant display of the precious metal quite as often as by the absence of it from considerations of an economic character.

Occasion has been taken in the course of this work to exclaim against the popular fallacy that unfortunately prevails to an amazing extent among house painters (by courtesy styled *decorators*, even when ignorant of the most rudimentary approach to decorative ability) that "matching the wall paper" is the true keystone to harmony of effect. Unhappy and misleading hallucination! The author has yet, lingering in his "mind's eye" with persistent malevolence, an awful recollection of an apartment which had been "decorated"—save the mark!—by one of these wilful destroyers of artistic peace, and which might have brought on a "bilious" attack in most of the unfortunates who were doomed to sit (it was at a public gathering) in that wretchedly painted chamber for several hours together. The surveyor had selected a warm pink-hued wall paper, having nothing in particular, by way of design, impressed upon it in a somewhat lighter hue of the same tint—it was the house painter's conventional salmon-colour, or the fancy draper's equally pronounced conventionalism, "crushed strawberry." And the depraved destroyer of all the canons of art had mixed up in his paint pot, and applied to every inch of the woodwork, doors, shutters, mantels, and the old-fashioned dado and skirting as well, an exact reproduction of the pickled salmon wall paper! As one sat there everybody's complexion merged into the wall behind them until the row of faces disappeared from the blurred eyesight altogether, and above the black coats of the company the villanous wall paper shone through them like a transparency, while a row of human hair, supported upon nothing that the eye could perceive, defined the places where the heads *ought* to be! Conceive such an effect in a ball-room, and wonder afterwards that maledictions should be showered upon the misguided perpetrator of such a huge practical joke effected in the name

of "decoration." This digression—a personal reminiscence—may be pardoned; the more readily if it effects the end in view, of bringing forcibly home to the reader the evil consequences of these far too frequent laches on the part of so-called *practical* decorators. The mischief does not end with the production of an awe-inspiring "harmony," it may create a confirmed dyspeptic out of a healthy subject if he happen to be afflicted with a right appreciation of the laws of artistic contrast. The painter has, indeed, much to answer for!

Where it is sought to introduce gilding as an aid to decorative detail on the woodwork of an ordinary apartment—more directly with reference to those rooms applied to residential or domestic purposes—the wall paper, if one be used, should be taken as much into account as when deciding upon the proper tones to be selected for the painting of the woodwork. And as it by no means follows that because the wall paper happens to be of a certain tone the painted work should match it, so it must not be supposed that a wall paper relying for its effect upon metallic details in the design needs to be supported by a quantity of gilding in the enrichments of the framing placed in juxtaposition with it.

On the contrary, if the walls have a mass of metal—or "gold" as the paper-stainer generally terms it—introduced into their hangings, it is often better to dispense with gold in the woodwork altogether, or at least to so sparingly apply it that the eye may have some place on which it may find that repose essential to the comfort and enjoyment of the occupant of the chamber. The fact is too often ignored that a mass of gilding on ceilings, walls, and woodwork has, when an apartment is lit up with artificial light, frequently a painful rather than a pleasing effect—all garish glitter, rather than that calm and dignified harmony which should be the sensation experienced if the apartment be embellished by a decorator of cultivated taste.

Take any ordinary door panel enriched by an ogee mould-

ing, and, by way of trial, gild the whole of the moulding—in most cases we shall find the ornament upon the panel itself deteriorated in appearance, lost as it were in the superior effulgence of too solid a metallic frame. As an alternative, gild only the narrow fillet next the panel, painting the body of the moulding—or curved portion—in some suitably harmonious tint; the result as compared with the first example will be found infinitely superior at an expenditure of one-third the quantity of gold leaf, to say nothing of the greater facility with which the oil size can be “run” by an expert pencil-hand upon the narrow flat, and the consequent saving of time in that respect alone.

Again, if the moulding of the door panel be exceptionally broad, and it is desired to “break up” its solidity of appearance, cut on a stencil paper some simple ornament, the simpler the better, a succession of triangular notches—the “dog’s tooth” ornament, referred to on a preceding page—or any running ornament of not too complex a character, and its rendering in gold—although the time taken will be little in excess of that needed to run in the whole member—will give an artistic effect precisely in the direction desired. There will not, indeed, be a saving in the quantity of gold used in this instance, for the gilder must of necessity cut his leaves into sections, each the width of the actual moulding. On the other hand, the surplus gold leaf, when removed by the application of the “dabber,” and finally with cotton wool, in the usual manner, will add to the value and quantity of “skewings,” and will in some measure compensate for the additional labour.

It is, generally speaking, impracticable to stencil ornamental details, particularly if made up of minute parts, in oil size on painted work. If well above the level of the eye, as for example on the cornice, over a fascia on a shop front, in exterior decoration, or in any elevated position, oil size may be used as readily as Japan gold size; but, as it invariably “spreads” under the stencil plate, the latter

vehicle is certainly preferable for stencilling in gold ; indeed, assuming that we are now stencilling on an ogee moulding, oil size must perforce be discarded altogether for such a purpose—its greater bulk or consistency would cause it to leave an unsightly edge to the detail which not even carefully “cutting in” afterwards with the ground colour would effectually conceal.

Japan gold size, however, being of a fluid nature, if properly prepared by the addition of a slight modicum of good copal varnish or linseed oil, if the weather or the temperature of the apartment be exceptionally warm, will answer every requirement and, as explained in the preceding chapter, the work will not necessarily require to be sized with a solution of parchment cuttings as in the case of work rendered in the more solid vehicle of oil size.

It may be well here to note that, while it is in some cases very essential that painted work should be prepared by means of white of egg and whitening, so that the gold leaf may adhere to the sized parts, a fruitful cause of the “spreading” of oil size—and even of Japan also—is that painters dust too great a quantity of whitening over the work. Some men are content to rub a soft rag over a ball of whitening and apply it with all the gritty particles, to the work to be gilded. *Always*, if an unpleasant after job of cutting up rough edges is sought to be avoided, tie the powdered whitening up in a bag made of two or three thicknesses of the finest muslin, and even then brush away any superfluity of the dust that may escape from the meshes of the material. If the work is well covered with solution of white of egg the merest touch of the pounce-bag should be sufficient. As there is reason for everything in the practice of the decorator it may be mentioned that the white of egg is used to prevent the gold leaf adhering to the *paint*, and that the whitening serves the equally essential purpose of preventing the gold leaf adhering to the *white of egg*. Thus, it may happen in a particularly hot room, that the white of egg, if used with too small a proportion of water—

an error to be carefully avoided—or from the extra “tackiness” of the groundwork, will be difficult to remove, not yielding easily to the persuasive influence of a damp soft sponge; in such a case, if the gold leaf also adheres to the white of egg, the work will be “as good as spoiled,” as the painter would say. At least, a great deal of patience and “touching up” would be required before a presentable finish would be achieved, while the waste of gold leaf entailed in consequence would be very considerable.

In practice the proportion of water should be rather more than one gill to the white of an egg, never less than that quantity; for if the work upon which the gilder is to exercise his skill be very “tacky,” whether the cause be from the humidity of the atmosphere or from too great a proportion of oil in the preparation of the colour, it is far and away best to defer the commencement of operations for a few days. If the egg be too weak the gold will stick to the work, and if too strong when the gold is washed off the egg will remain, and the work will be found streaked in all directions with the marks of every individual hair composing the tool with which it was applied. Many a good job has been spoiled by inattention to what nine journeymen out of ten met with in the trade will characterise as “these *unimportant details*.” The master, however, generally begins to realise their importance about the time that his men are being employed at ninepence or tenpence an hour for several days “repairing damages,” and all because an apprentice, perhaps, who was sent on to prepare the work, used his white of egg too strong or omitted to test the “tackiness” of the ground before proceeding to egg it in.

Five minutes spent in explanation to the lad, or the exercise of a little common sense on his part, might have saved pounds in waste of time alone, without the disagreeable consciousness to any right-minded employer of having turned out a “botched” job.

The panel decoration, Fig. 51, is a design which Mr.

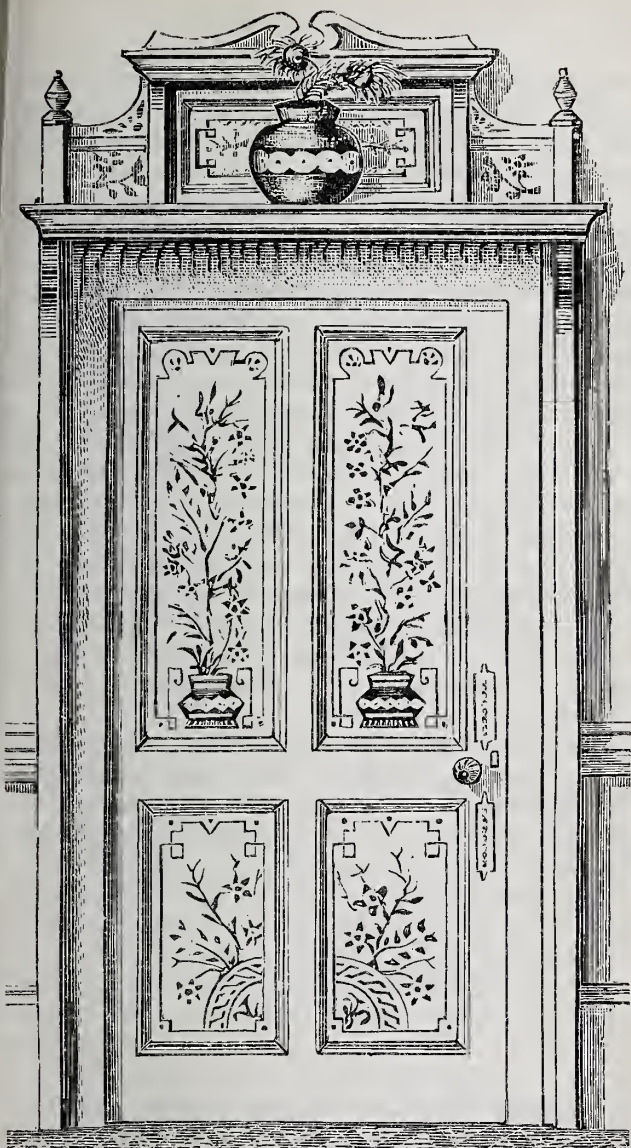


Fig. 51.—Decorated Door Panels

Hoyle supplied for incorporation into the panels of the door which is here depicted; the example affords an instance of the manner in which the stencil plate and hand-pencilling can be utilised together with the happiest effects. The idea is one readily producible in the hands of any intelligent workman, and would be appropriate to a boudoir or small drawing-room. The door itself is enriched with a shelf and ornamental backing, the style of which gives additional scope for panel decoration, either aided by simple stencilling or hand-painted ornament. If the room be finished in pale blues, the most desirable colour for the more prominent members of the architrave would be a deeper shade of "broken" blue tone, that is, a blue slightly tinted with burnt sienna or lake, to impart warmth and obviate too crude a distinction between it and the walls. The panels might be a broken white or a subdued cream tint, or they might, if a bolder contrast be aimed at, be a decided pink tone, composed of crimson lake, burnt sienna, and white lead—the lake alone as an addition to white would be too vivid for the purpose. The mouldings of the panels in this case may be white or marone, either extreme would be equally effective.

The ornament, which is of a free-flowing and *quasi*-natural character, might be rendered in marone upon the pink ground; or olive green, not too deep a tint, as approaching more nearly to the style of ornament might be preferable; the vases from which spring the main design could then be put in in marone tint and enriched with gold, the lines on the panels being also in marone or light shade of brown, to harmonise more directly with the ground surface. In the centre of each flower a "dot" of gold would assist the general effect immensely. Details of the enrichment to the over-door might be in gold and marone, or white and gold, according to the choice made for the panel mouldings. The dado, which, in the drawing, is of wood, may be similarly treated, and any ornament added should partake of the same general

character as that on the panels of the door. The skirting should be in brown, or at any rate considerably deeper in tone than other portions of the work.

An exceedingly pretty effect may be produced by a design of this kind rendered in gold on a black panel. In such a case the stiles of the door should be of a deep marone or lake hue, and further enriched by lines of gold run on the stiles parallel to and surrounding each of the panels. Of course, the whole of the architrave, the trusses supporting the over-door, and other parts of the subject should receive treatment in the same combinations of colours and gilding. On the side of each truss a small spray, or even a rose or patera, formed from one of the details in the pencil design, may be introduced, also in gold.

Another method of treatment, which would be suited to a bedroom, could not fail to form a pleasing arrangement of colour. Say the wall paper to be a pale cream ground on which is a pattern composed of pale greens, pale yellows (approaching ochre in hue), and pink; below this a dado of a purple tone and a suitable band on a green ground—all wall paper. Now, let the outer architrave be a pale creamy blue, composed of white, burnt sienna, and Prussian blue, the details "cut in" brown or Indian red, and paint the panels in a green tint several shades darker, proportionately, than the stiles and architraves, and not too bright, "broken," in fact, by the addition of burnt sienna—not sufficient, of course, to decidedly *stain* it, but enough to subdue the brilliancy of the green. For green and blue are hazardous colours to place together, and, as some would say, are opposed to many of the dicta laid down in previous chapters of this work, yet it is but another example, gained by experience, of the manner in which theories are modified in practice, for if these effects be tried by any practical man he will certainly admit the pleasing nature of the resulting combinations. Now reproduce the foliated design and the lines on the panels in a warm straw colour, compounded of ochre, chrome,

and sienna, reduced to the proper tint by admixture with white. On the stiles, which are of the creamy pale blue, like the architrave, place some marone or Indian red lines to each panel, and run in the mouldings in white, or reverse it and run the lines in white on the pale blue ground and define the mouldings in marone, reduced in strength of shade if the *whole* member is run in solid. Finish the skirting in appropriate tones.

In Chapter XIII. (p. 128), reference was made to the manner by which a stencilled design might be made a ground for hand-painting in natural tones, by putting it on the work in some broken grey tint, and then proceeding as if the whole had been rendered exclusively with the pencil. It only remains to add, with special reference to the drawing before us, that on account of its freedom and natural grouping, as well as from the positions suggested for its most fitting application, it would appear to lend itself excellently to reproduction in natural colours. The flowers and leaves, the stems and sprays, and the vases might all be admirably rendered into the round with surprising facility, while a butterfly, or any suitable specimen of insect life, here and there added to the design, would give it an additional effect, and all within the sphere of any ordinary "pencil hand" who understands the treatment of light and shade when rendered into oil colours. It need not, perhaps, be said that the jar shown over the door in the engraving is "material" decoration, and may be either a valuable specimen of antique "Worcester," or an empty jar which had once contained so very ordinary a domestic commodity as a few pounds of preserved ginger, and which now, by the aid of distance, "lends enchantment" to the beholder who examines it only from the floor-line.

CHAPTER XVII.

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS FOR POLYCHROME.



EAVING now the question of panel decoration in its simpler form, we may glance at that more elaborate system of ornamentation which formed the distinguishing characteristics of what is known as the Adams' style. The best examples of Adams were perhaps to be seen in the mansion of the Earl of Derby, belonging to a date prior to the commencement of the pre-

sent century, and were certainly characteristic in every way of the system of decorative effect then prevailing. Broadly speaking, its leading feature was the introduction of medallions, supported by ornaments of the vase kind, and often upheld by winged monsters of the dragon type, while the entire surface of the panels was literally covered in this way with free-flowing and graceful decoration.

The panels were usually enclosed in large and deeply indented mouldings, resembling greatly the "dentils" of the Doric order of architecture, and were frequently covered in "solid" with gold leaf. A similar example of these heavily enriched mouldings may be seen by those fortunate enough to obtain access thereto in the grand drawing-room at Grosvenor House, the town residence of the Duke of West-

minster. In this instance they appear on doors and shutters of solid Spanish mahogany, highly French polished, and have an imposing effect on account of the great size of the doors. Such effects as these are, however, suited only to apartments of regal dimensions, for the decorations of a palace would be decidedly out of place in a modern middle-class residence, and are mentioned here rather that those decorative readers who may fear that they are being asked to decorate every available square yard of surface in any apartment they enter may suffer from no excess of timidity in suggesting such embellishment to their customers.

Those who have studied the ideas prevalent in the Louis Seize period will know it is by no means a new departure to cover the room with the decorative painter's work from skirting to ceiling. It by no means follows, however, that because in these chapters an endeavour has been made to write upon as many as possible of the details that may be made to bear a part in the decorative whole, we should ourselves apply so great a profusion of decorative detail, or advise our patrons to do so. It is in a work of this kind advisable to omit, if possible, nothing respecting which the practical painter may desire to receive a hint in the course of his business.

It is purposed in this place to treat generally of the various details of the apartment in which we have been working during the last two or three chapters, and to give, as would the decorator on completing his job, a general "look round," commenting upon such matters as may require a little more care at our hands before we debouch upon the staircase, which may next require attention. We have decorated the ceiling, and have described at some length the colours upon its surface, in which the details of the cornice have been "picked in." If attention has been paid to the suggestions made, the effect overhead will be satisfactory. Or, have we run in the cornice in tones which appeared suitable when we tried them on the palette board, but now, when looked

at as a whole, appear too dark? Let us for the moment reason with ourselves on this point. Why is it that the colours appear so different to what we anticipated now they are *all* in? Probably because we have omitted to remember that the upper panes of the windows were to be filled with stained glass, and now that is done, the chequered light has completely altered some of our colours! And what is the lesson to be derived from this supposition? the reader will probably be asking. Several.

First and principally, if, in practical work, any doubt is likely to arise as to the expediency of using particular tones, err rather on the safe side—use modifications of the proper tones in preference to using them in their intensity—it is easier to run in a deeper tone if necessary than to put a delicate tint over some bright or deep tone without marring the delicacy of hue we seek to preserve in all decorative detail. Another deduction which we may draw from this phase of our experience is that it is inexpedient to put a lightly covered expanse of ceiling into a dark framework, as the cornice may have become, if the hues chosen be out of harmony with the general surroundings of the room, and too violently contrasted against the ceiling. Instead, in fact, of the cornice being a part of the entire scheme of decoration, as any appreciative designer would endeavour to make it, it becomes simply the *frame* in which the work is enclosed; and just as a beautiful picture may be marred by being exhibited in an unsuitable mounting, so may the most careful attention to colour, harmony, and design on the ceiling surface be sacrificed by the fatal juxtaposition of a badly chosen and inharmonious cornice.

We have treated this apartment as one possessing a *constructive* dado—that is one really existent and not *applied* by the paperhanger or the painter. In most modern houses the wall flank, however, rises directly from the skirting, and any addition to the decoration of the apartment in this direction would fall into the hands of the painter. In Chap. VI.

(page 50 *et seq.*) are given some illustrative diagrams of the relative heights of the dado in the various styles of decorative periods. Before leaving this subject we may supplement the remarks then made by briefly recurring to this portion of our work.

The walls of an apartment are distinguished, of course, by a definite object—that of affording the necessary support required to bear the weight of the ceiling; if, therefore, our system of decoration has tended to put out of sight the tangible intention of the architect in this particular, the work must prove unsatisfactory in a high degree, for it is a maxim that cannot be successfully ignored that decoration must be used solely as an *accessory* to architecture, not to supersede it. Thus we should be acting directly in contravention of the laws of gravity if we painted the upper part of our wall darker than the dado and skirting, the example quoted in reference to Pompeian ornament on page 102 to the contrary notwithstanding, since the idea of weight or solidity would go with the deeper tones, and an aërial lightness with the more delicate and subdued, the obvious impression being that the more solid part of the structure was supported upon nothing, and by a perversion of the canons of colour gradation, the architectural symmetry of an apartment is at once overthrown.

The same rule applies with equal force to the relations of the skirting and dado. Here, then, is a fixed law which, whatever originality may be infused into the *design* of the decorations so far as it relates only to form, must, when the colour scheme is in course of arrangement, be taken fully into the consideration of the decorative painter. For this reason, also, a constructive dado is to be preferred to one merely defined by painting the wall in gradations of contrasting colours.

It may be further remarked that the *apparent* size of an apartment is considerably altered by applied decoration. Thus a heavy mass of colour upon the ceiling will have the

effect of reducing the apparent height, although ornament in comparatively lighter tones will actually tend to give the idea of enhanced height, as compared with a perfectly plain expanse of ordinary whitewash. A deeply recessed or boldly arched cove above the lower members of the cornice will have the effect of increasing the apparent height of the ceiling, but dark or heavy tones of applied ornament thereon will again bring the ceiling plane more directly to the eye, and thus deceptively decrease the apparent height. The breaking up of the wall flank into panels increases the apparent height of the apartment. If the room be of such a height that it is desired to diminish the effect, a high dado, as in Fig. 7, on p. 52, will be appropriate, and will serve the purpose aimed at. If the room be exceptionally low the dado had best be dispensed with altogether, or only brought up to the height of three feet from the floor line, every additional inch taken from the wall flank will make the apartment appear much more than that additional inch lower. A wide frieze is unsuited to a low room, and in such cases the frieze must be dispensed with, and, if decoration is desired, a simple border only would be appropriate beneath the cornice. If the area of an apartment be small a dark tone of decoration will further decrease its apparent dimensions; it follows then that only light and aerial tones are appropriate for it; but if the area be large, and it is desired to decrease it to the eye, the colours chosen may be deep and rich in exactly inverse ratio to the first hypothesis. Every additional article of furniture has a like effect in decreasing the apparent size of a room in its relative proportions.

Another consideration in thus reviewing our decorated apartment will be the relations of the furniture to the colour scheme. In some instances within a decorative experience a great waste of gilding and pencilling has taken place, owing to that fact not having been taken into account; for much of the best work has been concealed behind the massive furniture introduced subsequently to the completion of the job, simply

because, in that case, the owner would not perhaps listen to advice from the decorator, but gave the upholsterer *carte blanche* to furnish the room "properly." A little conference between them at the outset of the arrangement would have obviated much of the disappointment experienced by the patron of the two tradesmen, who, of course, would have only himself to blame for not having thus brought them together in the first place.

If a room is to be hung with pictures or girandoles, or if there are to be a number of gilded mirrors and console tables included in the furniture, it is obvious that the colours chosen for dado and wall flank should be so neutralised in tone as to aid the effect of these additions to the chamber, the brighter and more lively tints being reserved for the frieze.

In large rooms, such as those used for public assemblies, &c., a dado may well be of marble, either real or scagliola, the effect imparted, that of such solidity as to bear the superincumbent weight of walls and cornices, being strictly in accordance with the dicta of good taste and the laws of nature. In cases where either of these are unavailable, painted imitations of suitable marbles are by no means so unworthy of consideration as the denouncers of the grainer and marbler would have people believe. The author has seen specimens of rouge royal, serpentine, jasper, &c., by a familiar hand, which, when carefully hand-polished, defied the criticism of the initiated, and excited the admiration of the leading men known to the trade. Of course they were *imitations*, and as such come beneath the lash of the "art" commentators of the day; but as these gentlemen also howl at the gilder because he makes a composition mirror-frame look like the solid metal, the value of their opinions does not count for a great deal in any assemblage of practical men. If we cannot afford to hang a solid gold frame against our walls, there is no reason why we should exhibit our paintings and engravings in a framing of putty or composition because

nineteenth-century lecturers affect to laugh down "imitations;" and if our patrons cannot afford real marble, let us give them, if they wish, the best painted imitations in our power. But this much we must admit: if we cannot get the work done *well*, let us rather confine our decorative effect to dividing the dado by lines, or suitable alternations of surface colour, and as it is immediately *under the eye*, let us be sure that it is at least properly painted—no streaks or brush marks or ragged edges, but "laid off" in a thoroughly workmanlike manner. If the work be "scamped" at this part of the business what may we not be prepared for on the ceiling or wall above the line of sight?

We may take it that our walls, if painted, should be struck in comparatively low tones, so as not to interfere with the decorative details placed against them. No such consideration need trouble us in dealing with the frieze. It is constantly in sight, even when the walls are hung profusely with pictures, and it should be our desire to see that it acts as an agreeable addition to the cheeriness of the apartment, and that the work upon it is cleanly and well finished. It is indeed the one prominent feature of the room, and may, by the unprofessional observer, be taken as the criterion from which to judge the quality of the workmanship displayed in the general decoration of the apartment.

We may next glance at the doors, ascertaining that the mouldings of the panels are not too obtrusive, and remembering that colours inclining to yellow have a tendency to increase the apparent width of the mouldings so treated, while blue diminishes the apparent strength of these important members; and as a concave surface appears really narrower than its actual width, so a convex moulding surface, in inverse ratio, will appear slightly wider to the eye. This is important to bear in mind, for if the moulding appear too wide, and thus seems to dwarf the panel decoration, it may be that we have used a colour inclining to yellow on a convex surface, thereby lending an additional effect to

the optical illusion of excessive width peculiar to that shape of moulding.

The upholstery or hangings should be as carefully chosen as any other details of the decorations, for if, as we have said, the walls form a large mass of colour, and thereby impart the prevailing tone to the apartment, the same remark may, in a lesser degree, perhaps be applied to the carpets and to the curtains. If the walls are aglow with brilliancy of hue, with panels, flowers or symbolism, or the sparkling vivacity of Watteau subjects, or any of the brilliant effects often sought after, the carpet and curtains should be as subdued in colour as it is possible to have them, while bright coloured hangings are only permissible when the prevailing tones of the decorative detail are of such neutral shades as French greys or cream white and similar tints.

Another and highly important consideration in the furnishing of a decorated apartment is the shape of the various articles which make up the *tout ensemble*. Thus, if it is intended to furnish in the popular revival of old-world fashions, such as the Chippendale, Queen Anne, or Early English styles of furniture, the decorations should correspond. A room decorated in the free-flowing and graceful style of the Louis Seize period would be utterly ruined in artistic effect by the introduction of the heavy and cumbrous chairs and couches of the so-called "Early English" order of upholstery, instead of the light and elegant forms of luxurious furniture peculiar to the gayest and brightest epoch of decorative craft, when tables, cabinets, chairs, *escritoirs*, and couches were remarkable alike for the beauty of their inlaid trophies and graceful lines, and when buhl work and the *marqueterie* of the Marie Antoinette period distinguished the appointments of any luxuriantly furnished drawing-room or boudoir.

It is an essential in an apartment of the Queen Anne type also that the material decorations, by which are understood the mirrors, cabinets, &c., should correspond with the

general features, and even the fittings and fixtures should partake of the general character. Of the latter the mantelpiece is the prominent object, and that upon which the eye first rests on entering an apartment. What then could be more disastrous to unity of purpose if in a room possessing a sculptured white marble mantelpiece the decorator proceeded to develop his "Early English" proclivities? Its presence would simply mar the entire effect, and hence his first consideration should be the substitution of a mantel and overboard in the style suited to his proposed plan of painted embellishment. In Fig. 52 is given a design appropriate to the Queen Anne character; it is entirely of wood, and might be either walnut or ebony or painted and gilded to the general scheme of decoration. In the coved part of the mantel beneath the shelf, which is divided by brackets, the panels so formed admit of decorative subjects, and these should be based upon the rules as to emblematic selection previously adverted to; but the meaningless portrayal of natural flowers on gilded backgrounds, much affected by manufacturers of mirror frames, should be avoided as not in accord with the leading features of this style of ornament.

A word in season as to the floor coverings of an apartment of this kind. The ordinary Brussels carpet, with ornaments of flowers in natural hues and leaves rendered in wool-like imitation of natural shadows, would be conspicuously out of place. The carpet pattern should be rather founded upon mediæval diapered ornament with appropriate bordering, and that part of the floor between the carpet and skirting board might be stained and polished, or a parquet of various woods arranged in geometrical patterns might be best introduced. Mats of various skins thrown down here and there add materially to the picturesque "order-in-disorder" which helps so much to give a pleasing effect to the *coup d'œil* in apartments of this character.

The dado in this case is formed of Indian matting fastened to the wall by a fillet, and above it on the band is a stencilled

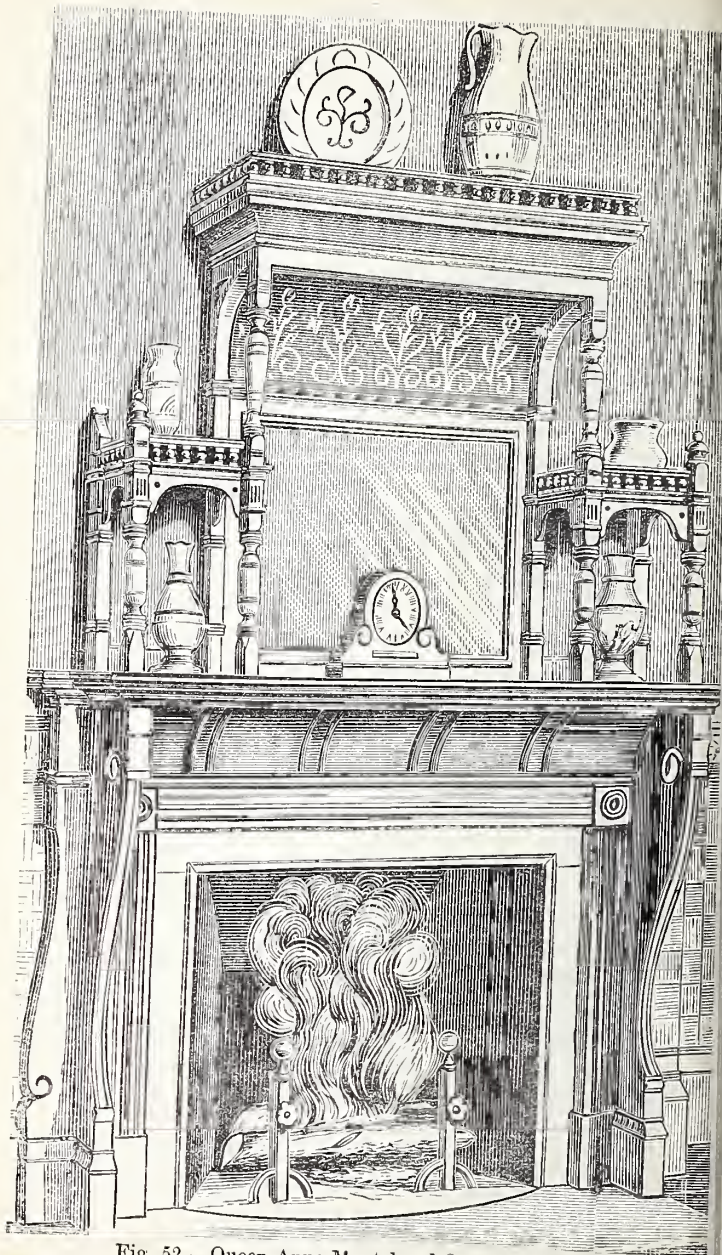


Fig. 52.—Queen Anne Mantel and Overmantel.

decoration; the wall filling is a dull red. Fig. 53 is a

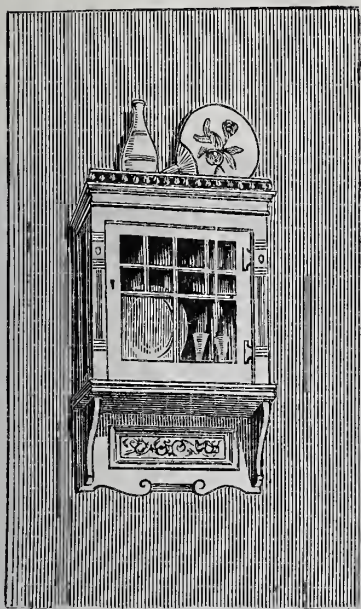


Fig. 53.—Queen Anne Wall Hanging Cabinet.



Fig. 54.—Panel Decoration to Cabinet.

hanging cabinet decorated in the same manner as the mantel, and having a panel decoration in the style given at Fig. 54,

which, although partaking of the character of Elizabethan ornament, is far more suitable than would be a study of lilies and storks, as would probably be suggested for it by the cabinet-maker.

Fig. 55 is another hanging wall cupboard, having painted panels decorated after the Japanese manner with figure



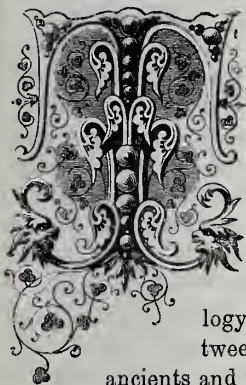
Fig. 55.—Japanese Hanging Cabinet.

subjects in colour ; it would make a quaint and artistic piece of furniture.

It will be seen therefore that in order to produce an effect that shall be in harmony with the taste of an educated patron, the decorator and cabinet-maker must act in concert. They may thereby reasonably hope to ensure success in preserving a well-balanced and appropriate *ensemble* in the general features of the decorated apartment.

CHAPTER XVIII.

STAIRCASE, HALL, AND VESTIBULE.



THE imitation of woods and marbles if it is allowable at all as a phase of the decorator's art, is surely allowable and appropriate in the decoration of the hall and staircase, although modern taste has run more frequently of late in favour of the productions of the paper-stainer.

Of course there can be no analogy, by any process of reasoning, between the marble entrance courts of the ancients and the usually sombre entries by which the apartments of a nineteenth-century town mansion are reached ; but, nevertheless, while the walls of a sitting-room would be simply unbearable if covered with a marbled paper-hanging, few would be disposed to cavil at the marbled walls of an entrance hall, or to reject the marbling on the score of inappropriateness. Yet it is undeniable that if an assemblage of various marbles be sought after for the decoration of a hall, the greatest care and taste is requisite in their selection. The ordinary rules of harmony and contrast, of course, would guide the decorator in a measure, but he has in addition to study the characteristic "figure" of each particular marble, as well as its tone of colour.

There is really no valid reason why a large entrance hall should be entirely covered with the usual "blocks" of Sienna marble, as is, in the majority of instances, found to be the one and only idea of hall decoration. An excellent effect may be produced solely by the judicious approximation of a variety of marbles. An instance may be given in which the marbling was wholly hand-painted, the paper-hanger being excluded, and in obedience to that modern mandate, which a decorator almost invariably receives from his patron at the present day, there was to be a "dado" round the hall. Here the aid of the carpenter was requisitioned, and the dado was arranged in a series of panels above the skirting, each panel projecting about half an inch beyond the actual wall surface, and having no moulding; these again were separated by a three-panelled pilaster, viz., at top and bottom a small square plaque, and between these an oblong. In conformity with the idea of rendering the imitation of marble as perfect as possible, these various projecting panels were all finished with a perfectly defined edge, as in an actual slab of marble. The body of the dado was rendered in what is known as "verde-antique," which was worked upon a ground of dark green instead of black, as is usually the case. This was to give a less sombre effect to the general appearance, and further to ensure that the skirting should still be the darker marble of the whole, viz. "black and gold," *i.e.* a veining of ochre and umber upon a black ground. The panels upon the dado proper were rendered in "jasper," worked upon a ground of Venetian red and chrome yellow; the warmth of tone contrasting finely, yet harmoniously, against the green. The pilasters were rendered in blue and gold for the upper and lower divisions, in imitation of that rarest of all marbles, "lapis lazuli," the centre division being the rich brown and white-veined Pavinazzi. A heavily membered moulding surmounted the dado, and this was rendered in "rouge royal." The wall itself was also divided into panels of "dove" marble, upon a filling of Sienna.

For the method of working the marbles, thus shown in combination as a decorative effect, the reader may refer to Mr. Ellis A. Davidson's excellent treatise upon the subject,* in which some of the examples have been admirably rendered into colour for the guidance of the student.

The leading feature of staircase decoration should be extreme lightness of general tone, especially in town houses, and anything tending to darken the general appearance should be avoided. For this reason many of the heavily raised flock papers, now so much used on the walls of staircases, are eminently unsuitable, unless the colours used upon them be of the lightest description, and even then so much of the pattern is in the shadow thrown by those parts of the design which are rendered in relief that the objection is not wholly superseded. Gilding judiciously introduced has a tendency to remedy this defect, or the use of flocked paper may be confined to the dado, if one be introduced, where from its solidity of appearance it would be in better taste than on the main wall surface.

A dark dado, separated from the wall filling by a band of a suitable contrasting colour, or by a plain line with an ornament above it in "diaper" on the wall itself, forms a cheap and readily producible staircase decoration. The division of the wall flank into panels is not suited to other than very large entrance halls, or wide and well-lighted staircases, as every addition of the kind tends to dwarf the apparent dimensions of the surface worked upon.

The woodwork of any ordinary staircase is usually grained, and for following out this procedure many arguments may be advanced, not the least of which is the superior durability of graining to ordinary plain painting, and its peculiarity of resisting the evidences of the wear and tear inseparable to a staircase. But the doors and architraves may be tastefully rendered in various woods, the panels in the lighter kinds,

* "House Painting, Graining, and Marbling." By Ellis A. Davidson. Page 115. London: Crosby Lockwood & Co.

such as oak, satinwood, maple, &c., and the stiles and framing in darker varieties, as walnut, pollard oak, &c. The treads and risers of the stairs, if of wood, may be grained in oak or walnut, and if only "plain-combed" are infinitely better in appearance than if merely painted a drab or stone colour, as they are generally done, while the wear is such as to amply compensate for the first cost incurred in finishing them off in this manner. For the skirting of a staircase where marbling is introduced, Egyptian green, black and gold, or verde-antique, are the best adapted; but grey and red granite are also suitable unless a darker tone of dado or wall filling has been chosen. As a rule the ceilings and cornices of staircases are merely whitened; but in the hall or passage, a band, or fillet of colour in the cornice; and a simple pattern, if merely a line and corner, upon the ceiling will be found to amply repay the slight cost of those embellishments.

In no part perhaps of the work of the decorator will the effects of lighting upon decoration be more apparent, and require more careful observation than on the staircase, if it be determined to adopt a particular system of colour throughout the house. It is probably simple enough when the local tones of colour are known to be either darker or lighter than others against which they are to be placed, or when the light thrown upon the work is known to be greater or less, to decide upon the tone to be given to a particular detail; but when those tones are modified, as they must be by the constructive characteristics of a modern staircase, by unequal contrasts of light and shadow, the greatest caution is necessary in determining what allowances shall be made in working for those changes of appearance created by relative effects. A door, for instance, situated in a position where the full light admitted by a window casement falls directly upon it, will appear very different in general tone to another, on the same landing perhaps, which from the angle at which it receives the light will be placed in

relative shadow. It is manifest that the decorator would not be expected to vary his colours to meet that peculiarity, but his judgment would be shown by selecting some medium tone of colour for the work, that the apparent difference should be not so clearly observable as a more decided colour would infallibly make it. It is in such comparatively minor points that the master of his craft is able to show his superiority over the mere theorist.

The paragraph above may be taken to emphasise the lightness of tone which should characterise staircase decoration; indeed the whole tenor of a decorative experience goes to show that where the operator commences with dark, heavy, or decided colours he unduly tries his capabilities. The use of vivid and overbold combinations can only lead up to the introduction of others yet more vivid or of greater depth. In the straining after harmony of effect thereby engendered, nothing but vexation and disappointment can possibly result. It is far easier to achieve pleasing harmonies with modified tints than with glaring or deep colours; but of course there is another side to the picture, viz. the equally objectionable use of meaningless tints arising from timidity, or ignorance of the proper combinations. Purity and clearness of tint is as great an essential to decorative success as skilful design; muddy or dingy colours are equally as distressing to the educated eye as are glaring or inharmonious colour combinations.

This purity of hue is indispensable to decorative success; it is not dependent wholly upon a punctilious observance of the colour theory, since we have shown that the inherent impurities of the various pigments the workman may be necessarily obliged to use have in themselves a marked influence upon the resultant tints obtained by their admixture with other tones. The successful practice of decoration is therefore considerably influenced by a just knowledge of the properties and values of the various pigments as well as of the principles of ornamental design.

These have been fully dwelt upon in the preceding pages, and little more remains to be done than to urge upon those who have perused them the necessity of bearing well in memory the recognised principles of decoration, not by a merely blind obedience to arbitrary canons, but that the workman may be in a position to apply them intelligently in his daily task.

Yet another consideration—and one of a very practical nature indeed—must not be lost sight of in thus summarising the lessons of the previous chapters, and that is the strict observance of cleanly and methodical habits by the decorative workman in the practice of his craft. He who is found to be the most painstaking, not only in preparing his colours, but in “cleaning up” after his day’s work has been completed, whose palette board is always neat and tidy, and whose pencils and brushes are cleansed with the most scrupulous care, will assuredly also be the most successful in the application of his theoretical knowledge to the practical work of HOUSE DECORATION.

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